Lewis, Matthew Gregory
Adelgitha

PR
4887
A6
18062

Vol 18

ADELGITHA;

OR,

THE FRUITS OF A SINGLE ERROR.

A TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS.

By M. G. LEWIS.

" —— Facilis descensus Averni:
Sed revocare gradum———
Hoc opus, hic labor est."— ÆNEID, L. VI

" 'Tis in man's choice never to sin at all,
But sinning once, to stop exceeds his power." ACT V.

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:
PRINTED BY D. N. SHURY, BERWICK-STREET, SOHO.
FOR J. F. HUGHES, NO. 5, WIGMORE-STREET, CAVENDISH-SQUARE.

1806.

Case
Y
134
188
v. 18

ADELAIDE;

OR,

THE FRUITS OF A SINGLE ERROR.

A TRAGEDY.

IN FIVE ACTS.

BY M. G. LEWIS.

LIBRARY JAN 6 1971 UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
PR
4887
A6
1806a

FOURTH EDITION.

LONDON:

TO

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS

THE DUCHESS OF YORK,

THIS TRAGEDY

Is most respectfully inscribed,

As a slight mark of gratitude for many obligations conferred on

HER ROYAL HIGHNESS'S

Most obedient

And devoted Servant,

M. G. LEWIS.

Feb. 1, 1806.

PREFACE.

THE reader, who is anxious to know how widely I have departed from History in the composition of this Tragedy, may gratify his curiosity by consulting Gibbon: neither can I plead ignorance as an excuse for my frequent violations of historical veracity. I am perfectly aware,

"That the dramatic character of my hero is totally unlike that of the real Conqueror of Apulia, and that the sentiments which I have attributed to him are

extremely ill-placed in the mouth of one, who was entirely indebted for sovereignty to his sword:—

"That Githa (who saved her husband's life at the Siege of Bari) was a different person from the Princess of Salerno, and that Robert Guiscard is suspected of having made way to the nuptial bed of the second, by poisoning the first:—

"That throughout the piece, to distinguish Robert of Hauteville by no other name than that of *Guiscard*, is scarcely less absurd, than it would be to write the Tragedy of Edward the First, and call him nothing but *Longshanks*:—

"That the only offspring of Michael-Ducas was a son, named Constantine, and that the Michael-Ducas, whose cause was supported by Robert Guiscard, in all probability was an impostor:"—

&c. &c. &c.

Considered therefore in an historical view, nothing can be more defective than this Tragedy; but on the other hand, nothing was farther from my intention in writing it, than to compose an historical play. The fact is, that having finally arranged the incidents of my plot, and sketched the outline of my characters, I thought, that by giving my personages "a local habitation and a name,"—I should add to the interest of my Drama; accordingly, I looked about for some historical niche, in which I might place my gentlemen and ladies; and a very slight resemblance between their situations was quite sufficient to make me identify Robert Guiscard with the hero of my play.

If in other respects this Tragedy should be thought to have merit, the lovers of the Drama will probably excuse the want of historical accuracy without much reluctance; on the contrary, if the piece is totally worthless, I am glad that I did not waste my time in removing a defect which to myself appears

immaterial, since I should still have left behind so many others of importance.

M. G. LEWIS.

Feb. 1, 1806.

P. S.—The reader will probably perceive a similarity between one of Lothair's situations, and that of *Arbace*, in the first act of Metastasio's Opera of *Artaserse*. This did not suggest itself to me, till my Tragedy was finished; but I must confess the resemblance is very striking.

ERRATA.

Page 71 Line 12. *after* "Lost" *put a comma*
78 — 19. *for* "Byzantine's" *read* "Byzantines"
79 — 2. *for* "Speak i—" *read* "Speak it—"
93 — 5. *for* "herelf" *read* "herself."

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

MICHAEL-DUCAS, Emperor of Byzantium.
ROBERT GUISCARD, Prince of Apulia.
LOTHAIR, TANCRED, } Norman Knights.
ALCIPHRON, DERCETUS, } Grecian Noblemen.
RAINULF, JULIAN, } Officers of Guiscard.
~~HUBERT, an old Minstrel.~~

ADELGITHA, Princess of Apulia.
IMMA, Princess of Byzantium.
ABBESS OF ST. HILDA.
CLAUDIA, an Italian Lady.

The Scene lies at Otranto.

The Action passes in the Year 1080.

T. R. C. G.
1818

—— Mr. Wm. McCready - Booth
—— Young ..... Thompson
—— C. Kemble ..... Cooke
—— Le Jeune ..... Grattan
—— Penn ..... Webster
—— Comer ..... Edmund Elliott
—— Duby ..... ~~Thomas~~ Raymond
—— T. Matthews ..... ~~Elliott~~ Vining

Miss Sommerville ..... Ariel
Mrs. Faucit .....
Miss Logan ..... Knight
Mrs. Sterling ..... Smallwood

6 Knights
8 Guards
Citizens
Peasants
Pages
4 Grecian Officers

8 Nuns
12 Ladies

1

Dis? Claudia

Alba

K.L.C. Silvus

Imma

= Ready at Bell =

Stage Cloth.

ACT I.

Lamps a little down, rise up gradually

The Scene represents a Grove, with the Chapel and Shrine of St. Hilda. In the latter Lamps are burning, and the Doors are closed. In the back-ground is a Convent, situated on a Rock.—The Sun is rising.— CLAUDIA *is discovered leaning against a Pillar of the Shrine.*

CLAUDIA.

HAIL, welcome morn! At length thy rising glories
Gleam on the convent-spires; and lo! yon lamps
With fainter rays illúme the shrine's arched windows
Where Adelgitha watches.—Sure, if virtue
E'er found peculiar favour from high Heaven,
Her prayers are heard, and Guiscard lives and triumphs.

[*A Bell tolls, and Nuns are seen descending the Rock.*]

Hark! 'twas the convent-bell!—and see, the Abbess
To chaunt their matins in yon chapel leads
Her white-robed train.—Ah! Heaven-devoted sisters,
How wise that choice which from *her* pangs exempts you,
Who weeps away the night, and dreads at morning
To hear a son or husband lives no more!

The ABBESS *of* ST. HILDA *enters with a train of Nuns.*

L. CLAUDIA [*kneeling*].

Most honoured lady, at thy feet in duty
Suppliant I bend.

ABBESS. *Come down.*

May the Saint's blessing, daughter,
~~Aid thee to struggle 'gainst a sinful world,~~
Still ~~And~~ guide thy pilgrim-steps to grace and goodness.

[CLAUDIA *rises.*]

Ha! wherefore burn those lamps?

CLAUDIA.

In yonder shrine
With prayer and penance has Apulia's princess
Past the long night, imploring Heaven, that morn
Might bring glad tidings of her lord in safety.

ABBESS.

Well may she rue that day when Michael-Ducas,
Byzantium's exiled emperor, sought these shores,
And sued at Guiscard's feet for aid and shelter.
His suit was granted; and perhaps ere this
That life, on which depends Apulia's welfare,
Has perished by some Grecian rebel's sword.

CLAUDIA.

And can such fears alarm St. Hilda's Abbess?
~~Doubts she of Heavenly love or Heavenly justice?~~
Has Virtue guardian angels? If she has,
Then guardian angels watch o'er Guiscard's safety!

ABBESS.

Against that virtue weigh the cause he fights for.

CLAUDIA.

The cause he fights for is an exiled king's.

ABBESS.

Weigh too that exile's guilt, which lost him empire.

CLAUDIA.

He who that empire seized was guiltier far.
Erred Michael? still Alexius was his subject.
Wronged were the Greeks? still Michael was their king.

ABBESS.

What then, are subjects bound, and sovereigns free;
Free to be proud, vindictive, cruel, false....
In fine, to be what Michael *was*?

CLAUDIA.

No, mother;
But that which Michael *was* he is not *now*.
His power is crushed. Led by his weeping daughter,
Suppliant I saw him kneel at Guiscard's throne,
And none to Guiscard ever knelt in vain.
I feel *like* Guiscard; feel, that heart is marble,
Which heaves no sigh at sight of ruined greatness,
And hate that light, which only glares to show
Faults, which affliction's iron hand has chastened.

ABBESS.

Claudia, thy blame is just; I own my error;
~~And when reproof swells on my lips again,~~
~~I'll think—"*he suffers!*"—and reserve my censure;~~
~~For those who sin, and *prosper!*~~——Means not your princess
To join our matin rites?

CLAUDIA.

She waits your coming.

ABBESS.

'Tis well—[*going*].—Yet comes not Claudia?

CLAUDIA.

Straight I'll follow;
But lo! Byzantium's princess, beauteous Imma,
Bends to this shrine her steps—~~she droops her head~~!
~~Her blue eyes float in tears~~! Oh! chide not, mother,
If from your pious rites I steal some moments
To whisper comfort to yon royal mourner.

ABBESS.

Chide thee? Nay, Claudia, take my heart's best wishes
To aid thy gracious office. Well I know,
One tear wiped off excells whole years of penance;
And they serve Heaven the best, who succour man!
Now, sisters, to the chapel!—Farewell, daughter.

[*Exeunt* ABBESS *and* NUNS *into the Chapel.*

CLAUDIA.

So sad?—I fear, I fear our un-owned youth....
Ah! why is virtuous love so rarely happy!

Enter IMMA ~~and Ladies~~.

IMMA [*speaking to herself*].

Still does he live? Sun, does he see thee still?
Or that pure blaze which fires the orient sky,
So bright to *others*.... is it dark to *him*?
'Twas here I saw him last! 'Twas here I bound
The scarf against his heart, and sighed, and wept

2

K.L.C. Michael Ducas
Decretus

~~And charged him bring it back untorn from battle.~~
Has he obeyed that charge? Oh! father, father,
Could'st thou but think like *me*, a straw-thatch'd cottage,
Lothair, and you would fill my heart's whole circle,
And then who would might wear Byzantium's crown.

CLAUDIA.

So early from thy couch, my Princess! Scarcely
Hath morning broke, and still with night-dews heavy
Droop the fair flowers.

IMMA.

Oh! such a night, my Claudia!
Such sights, such bloody glaives, such burning towns,
Such cries of widow'd wives and childless mothers,
Filled all my broken dreams, that from my couch
Trembling I sprang, and prayed to sleep no more!—
No news yet from Durazzo?

CLAUDIA.

Lady, none:
But soon.....

IMMA.

Oh! dread suspence! My father's throne,
Perhaps his *life* hangs on this battle's issue!
~~Perhaps ere long th' usurper's conquering gallies~~
Shall fright these coasts, and bid Apulia ransom
Its wealth and freedom with our forfeit heads!
Perhaps ere this our good, our glorious champion
Has signed in blood our ruin and his own;

And Adelgitha soon o'er Guiscard's corse
Will curse the day she pitied exiled Imma!

CLAUDIA [*artfully*].

Perhaps *Lothair* too.....

IMMA [*catching the name with eagerness*].

Aye! that good Lothair,
He, *he!* the gentlest, loveliest, bravest, best!
He, whose kind arm on the Adriatic waves
From pirates saved my life and dearer honour!
He, who when here we sued, and silent stood
The uncertain Normans, drew his sword the first,
And vow'd no more to sheathe it, till Alexius
Shed drops of blood for every tear of Imma's!
He too.... No! no!—It must not, shall not be!
~~Oh! ere the world shall lose that son of honour,~~
~~May *I* be sever'd from the worthless world!~~
Oh! ere I hear those words—"Lothair has perish'd!"
Come, friendly Death, and join me to Lothair!

CLAUDIA.

Lothair!—a foundling youth!—a nameless warrior!
And *thou*, Byzantium's princess?

IMMA.

Oh! I know it!
Know, that my passion's folly, ruin, madness!—
But still, ... I *love*!—~~there, *here* the blooming tyrant~~
Of gods and men has fixed his burning throne
In vain I strive to burst his roseate fetters;
E'en while I *strive*, I pause to kiss my chains!
In vain I pray at Reason's shrine for succour,
Since while I pray, I wish not to be heard!

~~Still, still I love~~; and loving, still must think
Thy deeds, Lothair, more noble than my birth,
Thy heart, Lothair, more precious than my treasures,
And one fond glance shot from thine eyes more brilliant
Than all the jewels in my father's crown!

CLAUDIA.

See, where that father comes!

IMMA.

He frowns! away then! [redacted]
I dare not meet him now. X L.

CLAUDIA.

What fear you, princess?
Those frowns are not for *you*.

IMMA.

Alas! alas!
When thus he frowns, he's ever fearful, Claudia.

He had a page....	no fairer, sweeter child
E'er blest a mother	Dear my father loved him;
Yet stung with sudden rage,—(oh! can I tell it?)—	
He stabb'd him, stabb'd the innocent boy!—Oh! Heaven,	

How painful 'tis to mark a parent's errors,
And not *esteem*, where duty bids us *love!*
He comes! Fly, Claudia, fly!

[*Exeunt into the Chapel.* L.

R. 2 E.

Enter MICHAEL-DUCAS, *followed by* DERCETUS.

MICHAEL.

I'll hear no more!

Must I nor sleep nor wake, but sung to rest,
Or from my slumbers rouzed, with Guiscard's praises?
The screech-owl's boding cry.. the approaching howl
Of famished wolves.. the chaunt of midnight witches..
Nay e'en my only child's expiring groan,
Were music to the praise of him I hate!

DERCETUS.

And wherefore hate him? Serves he not your cause?
Is't not for *you*, that now before Durazzo
His troops are leaguered, and his life expos'd?
Is't not for you....

MICHAEL.

Now be that hour for ever
Accurst, which saw the Emperor of Byzantium
Suppliant implore a Norman pirate's aid!
I was not born to *ask*, but to *command*;
My task was to *confer*, not *sue* for favours:
Yet now by Guiscard's aid, through Guiscard's bounty
'Tis given me to exist!—Oh! curses! curses!
I sink opprest by weight of obligations,
And each fresh service seems an added crime!

3

DERCETUS.

Yet in *his* eyes, whose interest they advance,
E'en *crimes* might well look *fair*.

MICHAEL.

No, no! were life
And empire at my choice, I'd rather plunge

3

Adelgitha -- Letter

Abbess

L. 2. 6. Imma

Claudia

8 Nuns

Ready at the Organ

In neighbouring Ætna, than owe life and empire
To this new Cato's grace! this Norman Brutus!—
~~Viewed by his virtue's gaudy blaze, my errors~~
~~Show ten times darker.~~—But last night, Dercetus,
A ruffian, hot with wine, cried—"Lo! where goes
The pensioned emperor! Had he ruled like Guiscard,
He need not here exist on Guiscard's alms!"—
Gods! what strange patience must that man possess,
Who calmly listens to a rival's praises,
Nor loaths that glory which obscures his own!

DERCETUS [*aside*].

The ungrateful tyrant chills my blood with horror!

MICHAEL.

What says't thou, slave?

DERCETUS.

If thus his sight afflicts you,
Soon come the hour when you shall meet no more!

MICHAEL.

That hour is ~~past~~, if Phocion's sword be sharp.

DERCETUS.

Phocion?

MICHAEL.

That Persian slave who left Otranto,
(Three days since then are o'er,) conveyed to Phocion
My mandate, 'midst the battle's heat and tumult
To plunge his sword in Guiscard's heart.

DERCETUS [*shuddering*].

Oh! Emperor!

MICHAEL.

Then will I seize my rival's falling sceptre,
Use it to strike Alexius from my throne,
And placing Adelgitha there, salute her
Queen of Byzantium and of Michael's heart.

DERCETUS.

Will she accept that heart?

MICHAEL.

She will!—She must!

DERCETUS.

What! she, the model of all wives, all women!
~~Whose passion for her lord . . . On man no'er doated~~
~~Woman, as doats on Guiscard Adelgitha.~~
Whose ~~Her~~ love . . ~~her~~ virtue . . . .

MICHAEL.

There's the charm, Dercetus!
~~I'm weary of Byzantium's easy conquests,~~
~~Of venal loves, cold hearts, and passive charms~~:
But oh! 'twere bliss to bend this stubborn beauty,
Crush the proud fabric of her idol, Honour,
And while she weeps to view its ruins, teach her,
She's fond, and frail, and false . . in short, a *woman!*
By Claudia's lips she charg'd me here attend her;
[*The organ is heard.*]
And hark! the organ speaks the matins o'er,
The doors unclose: She comes!—Retire, Dercetus.
[*Exit* Dercetus.

[*The doors of the Shrine open.* ADELGITHA *is discovered (in mourning) kneeling at an altar:* IMMA, CLAUDIA, *the* ABBESS *and Nuns surround her.—During the following speech* IMMA *kneels to* MICHAEL DUCAS, *and seems to receive his blessing.*]

ADELGITHA.

Chaste sisters, take my thanks! your holy comfort
Was balm to my torn heart: though sad, I'm tranquil,
Though chearful, I'm resigned; and now submissive
I'll meet Heaven's will, let Heaven or smile or frown.
Oh! thou whom sorrow bows and fears afflict,
Lo! your best refuge! At Religion's shrine
Kneel thou for grace, for strength, for resignation,
And ask that aid which none e'er asked in vain!

ABBESS.

Just is thy thought, and for the world 'twere well
Thought all like thee.—Now pardon, gracious Princess,
For convent duties call me hence. *Ex.*

ADELGITHA.

Dear mother,
Use your free will; *your* will is *my* best pleasure.

[ABBESS *and Nuns return to the Convent.* *Ex. A. & S.*

ADELGITHA [*to* CLAUDIA].

Friend, join the train—Yon height o'erlooks the Bay;
Thence may'st thou first discern the bark, which brings me
Those tidings which I long, yet dread to hear.

IMMA.

Oh! be that office mine!—With restless eye
I'll watch the waves; no, not a speck shall 'scape me:
And when at length I spy the wished-for sail,
So swift I'll speed, I'll make the zephyrs jealous
To find their wings out-stripped.

ADELGITHA.

My kind, sweet Imma!

IMMA [*kissing her hand*].

My friend! my mother! Claudia come.

[*Exit with* Claudia.—
as the wind

Manent ADELGITHA *and* MICHAEL.

MICHAEL.

Now, Princess,
Obedient to your summons....

ADELGITHA.

We're alone,
And what I've now to say requires no witness.—
When driven by desperate rebels from Byzantium,
(I'll spare your ears what *caused* their fierce despair,)
~~Pursued and shunned, your head at price, and wandering—~~
~~With one frail bark from coast to coast~~, 'twas here
You sought protection.

MICHAEL.

Say, 'twas here I *found* it.

ADELGITHA.

Our means were small; our court can boast no splendour;
But what was ours, we gave.

MICHAEL.

And gave it nobly;
Gave it with freedom, which endeared the gift.

ADELGITHA.

E'en at this hour, my lord beneath Durazzo
Sustains your cause.

MICHAEL.

He does.

ADELGITHA.

His wealth is lavished,
His blood is risqued for you.

MICHAEL.

I own his favours;
But wherefore ....

ADELGITHA.

Still some chance neglect ....

MICHAEL.

None, lady?

ADELGITHA.

Some former feud long past .. some fancied insult.

MICHAEL.

With *neither* can I charge him: if with *both*,
How light such faults must weigh against such merits!
My throne .. my life his gifts.... Sure if to man
E'er man owed gratitude, to him *I* owe it.

ADELGITHA.

Your gratitude?

MICHAEL.

'Tis his, and his of right:
None doubts it, sure!

ADELGITHA [*significantly*].

None *should*.

MICHAEL [*haughtily*.]

None dares.

ADELGITHA.

None *does*.—
Know you that scroll? [*showing a letter*.]

MICHAEL [*starting*.]

Ha! faithless slave!—The letter
I sent to Phocion! [*aside*.]

ADELGITHA.

Robbers slew the bearer,
And 'midst his plunder was this writing found.
Straight to my hands 'twas given; for e'en those robbers,
Whose blood, if seized, had streamed by Guiscard's justice,
Rejoiced to save that precious life, which *he*,
For whom that life is risqued, would fain have taken!

MICHAEL.

Confusion!

ADELGITHA.

Here it stands, the ungrateful name!
Is't not thy hand .... thy seal?—And were *these* wanting,
Does not the inhuman business it enjoins

Declare that none but Michael was the writer?
Canst thou deny....

MICHAEL.

My heart can bear no more,
And I must vent its rage, or die!—Yes, Princess;
Yes! 'twas *my* hand which trac'd that plan of death,
And from my soul I wish the murder done!
I hate thy Guiscard! hate him fiercely, deadly!
And wouldst thou know, what *most* excites my hate?
He's Adelgitha's husband.

ADELGITHA [*surprised*].

How?—What cause ...

MICHAEL.

That too I'll answer! Hence, Disguise! Cold Prudence,
Spare thy vain warnings; ~~all my soul's a storm,~~
~~And Passion's whirlwind drowns thy feeble voice.~~—
Princess, I love thee!

ADELGITHA [*starting; then, after a moment's pause, with contempt.*]

Thou?

MICHAEL.

To frenzy love thee!
And with what strange, what fierce, what desperate passion,
Judge by this rash avowal! Those bright eyes *,
If I *am* guilty, lighted me to guilt!
They bade me murder Guiscard; *they* seduced me

* —— "~~Twas I, who killed King Edward,~~
~~But 'twas those heavenly eyes which set me on.~~"—*Richard 3d.*

Suppliant to clasp the Norman pirate's knees!
They make me feel (those stars of Michael's fortune!)
Michael were wretched on Byzantium's throne,
Unless he shared that throne with Adelgitha!

ADELGITHA.

If I so long have listened to these insults,
'Tis that surprise and anger struck me dumb—
Thou rival *Guiscard?* Couldst thou hope, her love
Who shares that hero's, could e'er stoop to *thee?*
That hero, who misplaced in this bad world,
Seems meant to show mankind what man should be!
That hero, on whose iron virtue vainly
The serpent Slander wastes his poisonous teeth!
And could'st thou hope... thou only could'st, by thinking
My taste erroneous as thy heart is base.

MICHAEL [*choaking with rage*].

How! how!

ADELGITHA.

He fights your wars! defends your cause!
Oh! brave!—You'd pay him with his wife's dishonour.
Alas! alas! like thee too many *think*,
Too many *act*; ~~and in the eagle's absence~~
~~Rob, weasle-like, the eagle's nest.~~—Now, righteous Heaven,
Reserve thy deadliest shafts for him, who seizes
The soldier's absence to corrupt his wife!
Then when the brave man hastens home, he finds
Domestic shame blush on his laurelled brow,
Sees the fair garden of his joys a desart,

4

R. h. L. Summa
Decretus Quinctum

And hears his desolate children mourn their mother,
Though living, dead to *them!*—Oh! shameful!
shameful!

MICHAEL.

You wrong me, Princess!—As my wife and empress,
Placed on Byzantium's throne....

ADELGITHA [*ironically*].

Byzantium's throne?
Oh! fair and tempting gift! Oh! generous proffer!
Yet while you make it, 'twere as well, methinks,
Did you reflect, unless by Guiscard's valour
Byzantium's throne will not be yours to give.
Then pardon, mighty Prince, if I decline
These gracious offers; if I dare prefer
Glory with Guiscard to contempt with thee,
And think, that he who succours banished kings
Is nobler than a king, whom crimes have banished.

MICHAEL.

Proud woman, dar'st thou....

ADELGITHA [*with a commanding air*].

Hold! for Imma's sake
Two days I give thee to provide some refuge:
So long I'll hide thy fault from Guiscard's vengeance,
But on the third this scroll....

MICHAEL.

I thank you, Princess,
And for two days shall count my life secure,
Depending on a *woman*'s silence!—Gods!
~~That I should err so grossly!—I believed~~

~~Your wit would guide your choice, nor ever doubted~~
~~At least that gratitude would seal your lips.~~
Oh! I could dash my front on earth, for trusting
To woman's gratitude, or woman's sense.

ADELGITHA [*calmly*].

Thus ever rail *their* tongues at female *judgement*,
Who want that worth which merits female *love*.—
The good and wise more justly weigh our value,
Fly to our arms for sorrow's cure, reposing
Their cares on our kind breasts, and find no comfort
Like *hers*, who joins the mistress, friend, and wife.—
But *thou*, (ne'er seeking *love*, content with *pleasure*,
Curst with indulgence of each vain caprice,
Suspecting treason e'en on beauty's bosom,
And tasting poison in each honied kiss,)
Mayst *thou* still think all women false and light,
Incapable of faith, unfit for trust,
And born to be man's slave, not man's companion.
Such may *they* think us still, who act like *thee*;
I cannot wish them worse than such to think us!

IMMA [*without*].

Speed, Princess, speed!

ADELGITHA.

Hark! Imma comes.

R. H. B. Enter IMMA. *on platform*

IMMA.

Oh! speed!
Swift cuts a bark the billows, and the shores
Groan with the throng of anxious citizens.
Shall we not hasten....

ADELGITHA.

On before, sweet maid!
I'll follow straight. [*Exit* IMMA.

ADELGITHA [*in a decided tone*].

Forget not what I've said,
Nor brave the lightnings of my hero's eye!
Two rules are Guiscard's; ne'er to sin himself,
And ne'er to pardon others, when they sin:
Then dread to meet his wrath, be timely prudent,
Fly with thy shameful secret, fly and live.
Farewell.—[*Going.*]

MICHAEL.

And thou who speak'st so stern and high,
~~Know'st thou not, there's on earth no hate so deadly~~
~~As hate, which finds its source in slighted love?~~
Dost thou not fear that....

ADELGITHA.

I fear *thee?* Oh! no!
Salerno's daughter was not born to fear!

MICHAEL.

Salerno's daughter? [*starting.*]

ADELGITHA.

Aye! that name, it seems,
Has reached your hearing? Then I need not add,
Dishonour and that name have still been strangers.
And she, whose veins can boast that hero's blood,
And she, whose heart retains that hero's lessons,
Rest thou assured, thinks nothing bright but virtue,
And nothing dreadful but deserved disgrace! [*Exit.*

MICHAEL.

Salerno's daughter? Should it be.... Dercetus!

Enter DERCETUS.

DERCETUS.

My Prince!

MICHAEL.

Those letters, which the dying Norman
Gave to thy care in Astra's wood.. thou hast them?

DERCETUS.

The portrait too....

MICHAEL.

A portrait?—Find it straight,
And bring it to my chamber—Speed, Dercetus!

[*Exit* Dercetus.

MICHAEL [*alone*].

Each fresh reflection gives my hopes fresh vigour,
And if those hopes prove just, the game's my own.
Compelled to silence.... suppliant for my mercy..
My rival dead.. But how?—That young Lothair..
'Tis plain, his heart is Imma's!—Could I win him..
Why doubt it? May not *all* be won? and has not
Each man his price, for those who choose to pay it?
When offers fail, virtue's not *strong*.. but *dear*;
And that stern Honour, which disdains a *dukedom*,
A *sceptre* shown, will bow and take the bribe. [*Exit*.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

1

L. Imma
Lothair 2nd Blank-letter

2

R. Michael Ducas

ACT II.

A Gothic Chamber.

Enter IMMA.

IMMA.

He's safe! he's well!—Oh! happy, happy Imma!
He's safe! he's well!—Flow, dews of rapture, flow,
For much ye differ from the tears I shed,
Mourning my warrior's absence!—Yet is't real?
Is't not a dream, a charm, a fairy fiction?
Oh! Heaven, I fear it! Still then breathe, my lips,
To hush my doubts, those words, those heavenly words
—"He's safe! he's well!"—Hark! hark! I hear his footsteps.

LOTHAIR [*without*].

Imma!

IMMA.

I hear his voice!—Oh! bliss too keen!
I faint! I die!—[*She sinks on the sopha.*]

Enter LOTHAIR.

LOTHAIR [*throwing himself at her feet.*]

My Princess!

IMMA.

My Lothair!—[*A moment's pause.*]
Art safe?—*Quite* safe, Lothair?—[*Weeping.*]

LOTHAIR.

Eloquent tears,
What words could speak your meaning?—Safe, sweet, safe,
And Imma's still, and ever, ever Imma's.—[*rises.*]
You ask not of Durazzo's fight?

IMMA.

I see thee,
And having *thee*, have *all!*—Yet say! Brave Guiscard....

LOTHAIR.

Is safe, my love; is conqueror of Durazzo;
And ere the sun ascends his mid-day chariot,
The hero's keel will bite Otranto's shore.

IMMA.

Blest be those words for Adelgitha's sake!

LOTHAIR.

E'en now I left her—Had'st thou seen her rapture..
Such tears.... such sobs.... while ever and anon
She thanked Heaven's grace too bounteous to its handmaid:
Then bade her damsels bring her nuptial robes,
Throw wide her castle-gates to mirth and feasting,
And still exclaimed—"Rejoice! rejoice, Apulia,—
Your hero lives, has conquered, and returns!"

IMMA.

Sure none e'er felt more love!

LOTHAIR.

Sure none e'er gave it
To one more worthy!—Oh! that great proud day,
When scared by Grecian fire and hostile myriads,
Our troops resolv'd to raise Durazzo's seige,
And thronged to gain their vessels! Swift as lightning
Flew Guiscard to the crouded port, and dashing
The foremost rebel back—"Turn! Turn!" he cried,
"Shame to the vanquished! To the victors glory!
"No flight! no refuge! no resource but triumph!
"Normans, you conquer here, or die!"—he said,
Then hurled a firebrand midst the fleet, and swiftly
Spread the devouring flames from ship to ship.
Each trembled! each turned pale!—Till each and all,
Fired by the hero's fire, with one accord
Brandished their swords, struck their broad shields, and shouted,
"Right, Guiscard, right! we'll conquer here, or die!"

IMMA.

'Twas bravely dared; but to my ears, Lothair,
The tale of war still bears a painful sound.
I see in captured towns but mangled corses;
I hear in victory's shouts but dying groans;
And think one flower from pity's wreath more precious
Than laurel-groves watered with tears and blood!
Your prince is great, is good! I own his virtues;
But still those virtues wear so stern an aspect. . . .

LOTHAIR.

Stern to the *wicked*; lenient to the *weak*.

IMMA.

Ah! friend!—thy partial eyes.....

LOTHAIR.

No, Princess, no!
Judge by this fact.—That day we forced Durazzo,
(While war yet raged, the streets all ran with blood,
And blazing towers crushed in their fall alike
The victors and the vanquished), mid the tumult
A fierce Varangian from its mother's arms
Had torn a new-born babe! Wild shrieked the matron
To Heaven for aid.....

IMMA.

Alas!

LOTHAIR.

Nor shrieked in vain,
For *Guiscard* heard her!—To the tower he flew,
And while his left hand caught the child, his right
Seized by his yellow locks the wild barbarian,
And hurled him from the walls!—Next with his scarf
Did Guiscard bind the babe's slight-wounded throat,
And gently on its mother's breast replaced it.
Wildly she caught it, sank upon her knee,
Traced in its blood a cross upon its brow,
And called it—"*Guiscard!*"—Then his great heart melted;
His stout frame trembled, and I saw tears forcing
Through his closed helm their way!—By Heaven! I never
Thought strength so glorious, as I thought his weakness,
Or man worth envying till I saw those tears!

IMMA.

Oh! lovely act!—Hear it, ye saints, and shower
Celestial blessings on that hero's head,
'Mid victory's frantic swell, who still remembered
A conqueror's noblest office is, *to spare!*

MICHAEL-DUCAS [*without*].

Where stays the knight?

IMMA.

Hark! 'tis my father's voice!
Dear friend, be wary!

LOTHAIR.

Fear not!

Enter MICHAEL-DUCAS.

MICHAEL.

Ha! Lothair? *to him,*
Your mission, warrior?

LOTHAIR.

Mighty Lord, from Guiscard
I bring glad news; Byzantium's free! the usurper
Fled none knows whither, and the flag of Ducas
Floats from Durazzo's towers.—My Prince more fully
Details in these his victory.—[*presenting letters.*]

MICHAEL.

How, proud youth?
Methinks, Byzantium's Lord might claim thy knee!

LOTHAIR [*calm and firm*].

Your pardon, Emperor; 'tis not *pride* restrains me,
But knightly honour.—Ne'er may Normans kneel

Save to their own liege-lord; nor e'er from me
Shall foreign king receive that suppliant homage,
Sacred to Heaven, my mistress, and my Prince!

MICHAEL.

Ha! dar'st thou, haughty stripling.....

IMMA.

Oh! best father,
Unbend that frowning brow! He means no insult,
And though his knee withholds its show of duty,
Lothair would die to serve you! sooth, he would!

MICHAEL [*sternly*].

Imma, retire!

IMMA.

Alas! have I offended?
Nay, pray you frown not, father!—I obey! [*Exit. R.*

LOTHAIR [*aside, while the Emperor opens his letters*].

In grief she goes! Not for the world's wide empire
Would *I* have drawn one sigh from that kind bosom,
Or been the cause of that ambrosial shower
Which dims her eye's blue Heaven!—[*looking out*]—
Still, still she weeps!
Gods! of what marble must that man be fram'd,
Who feels not on his heart like molten lead
Each tear, his brutal harshness costs a woman!—
How's this?—He stamps, and frowns

MICHAEL [*furious*].

Thou strumpet Fortune,
Wilt thou ne'er blush to follow Guiscard's car

Chained like his slave? Still wilt thou shower thy laurels
On him, and none but him?—*He* won the battle!
He seized the town! *He* gives me back my kingdom!
Ere I accept his gift, may the earth open,
And swallow up that kingdom! ~~May Byzantium~~
~~The day he crowns me fall on him and me,~~
~~And one vast ruin crush us~~!

LOTHAIR.

What can mean
This strange and sudden passion!

MICHAEL.

Hear me youth!
Dar'st thou be great, be happy? Dar'st thou merit
My daughter's hand?

LOTHAIR.

Great Prince.....

MICHAEL.

I know, thou lov'st her:
Dar'st thou deserve her, say?

LOTHAIR.

Can man deserve
So bright a gem? Oh! if he can, say how;
~~Thou canst not say what I'd not dare for Imma!~~

Through Arab hosts command me hew my passage,
And plant the cross e'en on their Prophet's tomb;
Drop, where Charybdis foams, your crown, and bid me
Retrieve it from the whirlpool's ravenous jaws;

Name aught that's strange and dire; some wond'rous deed,
~~(So hard, it joins in one the Herculean labours,~~
~~So dread, its mention makes the hearer faint,)~~
Nor doubt, for Imma's sake that deed I'll do,
Or perish in the attempt!

MICHAEL.

Indeed? I'll try thee.——
I have a foe.....

LOTHAIR [*eagerly*].

He from this hour is mine!

MICHAEL.

He must not live.

LOTHAIR.

He must not, or Lothair.
Declare your wrongs, his name, and straight I'll seek him,
And hurl defiance in his face!

MICHAEL.

Rash stripling,
Thou know'st not what thou say'st! So great his power,
His rank so lofty, never may thine arm
Be raised 'gainst his in combat.

LOTHAIR.

What then would'st thou?
What mean'st thou, I should do?

MICHAEL.

Surprise him sleeping,
Plant in his heart thy sword, and Imma's thine.

LOTHAIR [*starting in horror*].

Surprise him sleeping?

MICHAEL.

Straight thy crimson hand
Shall clasp my daughter's, and Byzantium's sceptre.
Speak but the words—"He's dead!"—Let me but see
Thy limbs dyed ghastly-beauteous in the blood
Of that loathed basilisk! ~~that snake, who poisons~~
~~All my life's fairest flowers! that gnawing canker.~~

LOTHAIR.

Hold! Name him not!—What I have heard thee say,
Would now compel me to espouse his cause,
~~Nor would I gladly side 'gainst Imma's father.~~
Farewell!—[*going.*]

MICHAEL.

Stay, youth!—Reflect, a crown invites thee,
A crown and Imma! ~~Wilt thou lose such blessings,~~
~~When one poor blow would strike them to thy foot?~~
Be wise! Be wise!

LOTHAIR.

Wise, say'st thou? Prince, I *will* be,
Since *He* shows wisdom most, who most loves virtue.
That narrow cunning, whose short sight ne'er looks
Beyond this world and present bliss, perhaps
Might count these offers tempting—But *true* wisdom
~~(Whose prescient eye, o'er-leaping time and space,~~
~~Descries new worlds, pure joys, and life eternal)~~
Makes me feel, man's Heaven or Hell is conscience!

3 This makes me feel, that robbed of truth and honour
Life's charms are lost, and that if guilt's the price,
E'en Imma's heart would be too dearly purchased.

MICHAEL.

And could'st thou dream, that aught but some strange crime
Could make thee worthy of an Emperor's daughter?
Think what thou wert? A nameless base-born orphan,
Loved through caprice, and reared by stranger-bounty!
Think, what thou'rt now? A wandering knight, whose sword
Must carve his fortune, or he fasts for't.—Gods!
And must *thou* prate of guilt, and bliss, and conscience?
Must thou be delicate, thou, foundling, thou?
R. 'Tis ludicrous! away!
M. B.

LOTHAIR.

I hear, and pity
The man, whose pride it soothes to wound a worm.
Heaven pardon you, as *I* do! To the point.—
Proudly you ask me, "what I *was?*"—I answer,
—"Born to be that, which *thou* wert born to be;
A *man.*"—Again you ask me, what I [illegible] *am!*
I answer—"that which all admire; a *soldier!*"—
Nor can I think, it blasts a soldier's courage
To own, he dares not do an act of shame.

MICHAEL.

1/2 A quaint [illegible]!—Vile thing! Such notions leave

R. Devotion 2e

Citizens

Peasants

Dis? Ladies & Gentlemen

of the Chorus

6 Knights

8 Soldiers

R.U.C. Tancred

Rainulf

Guiscard

R. Adelgitha

4 Ladies

L. 4 Officers

Bugle ready L.

The stock from which you sprang no longer doubtful:
Base were your parents, as your feelings base.

LOTHAIR.

'Twould sooner strike a generous mind, methinks,
Not what my parents *were*, but what I *am*.
You boast a race by ancestors ennobled;
I boast a name ennobled by myself.
Pure from all flaws, and sacred from corruption,
Read honour's patent written in this scar,
Received, while fighting by my Sovereign's side.
Who dates his line from Egypt's earliest kings,
May boast more *antient* titles, none more *glorious*;
Nor can a monarch's veins hold nobler blood,
Than flowed from mine in service of my country!

MICHAEL.

Hence, slave, nor teize me with this cant! I hate thee!

LOTHAIR.

If for such thoughts you hate me, Prince, I know not,
If most you merit pity, or contempt.——
But hark! the warder from the beacon-tower
Speaks Guiscard's fleet in sight!—I go to join him:
Yet ere I leave thee, learn this truth from me.
To *love* is happiness; to *hate* is woe!
And while such actions as deserve to win
Thy heart's affections, make it swell with venom,
Thou can'st not find worse foes than thine own passions,
Nor torture others as spite tortures thee!

[*Exit.*

MICHAEL.

Braved by this froward boy?—Shame and confusion!
Yet 'twas ill-judg'd to urge. Now! now, Dercetus.

Enter DERCETUS. R H

MICHEAL.

That portrait!—Quick!

DERCETUS.

'Tis here!—[*giving it*].

MICHAEL.

By heavens, the same! L H
'Tis well!—Retire!—[*Exit* DERCETUS].——Now 'scape me if thou can'st,
Imperious dame! This proof secures thee mine!
Yes! since I hold her secret, she'll be silent;
For Interest's chains, though fine, are form'd so binding,
Their strength can fetter e'en a woman's tongue!
L H [*Exit* *.

* The offer made by Michael-Ducas to Lothair resembles that of Bajazet to Axalla in Tamerlane; but it appeared to me that the circumstance of Axalla's princely rank and of Lothair's obscure origin gave so different a turn to the two scenes, that I did not think it necessary to alter mine, merely on account of the similarity of the situations. I *dare* not conclude this note without expressing a hope, that no *good-natured* critic will accuse me of presumptuously intending to enter into a competition with Rowe.

Change

Scene 2nd The Port of Otranto, with an extensive view over the Adriatic Gulph. Citizens and Peasants of both sexes are grouped in attitudes of expectation. 3 Shouts, while the Scene opens; ~~after which~~

Enter LOTHAIR.

LOTHAIR.

He comes! he comes! Rejoice, oh! happy people!
~~Raise the glad shout, and swell the song of triumph;~~
~~Let choral melody and festive joy~~
Welcome the hero to your subject-shores.

CHORUS.

Smile Apulia! smile once more!
All thy grief and fears are o'er,
Guiscard's galley seeks thy shore;
Smile Apulia! smile once more!
[~~Here the fleet traverses the back ground.~~]

FEMALE PEASANTS.

Valour now his strength reposes;
War at length has smoothed his frown;
Duteous Love with freshest roses
Wreathes the victor's laurel crown.
[~~The boat ground.~~]

CHORUS.

Grateful prayers to Heaven ascend!
Shouts of joy the welkin rend;
While in Guiscard's name we blend
Hero! patriot! sovereign! friend!

[*As the Chorus ends, a galley arrives;* GUISCARD *stands on the deck, attended by* TANCRED, RAINULF, *—and Knights—All land.*]

GUISCARD [*springing on shore*].

Mine! mine again!—Once more with conquering steps
I pace these sounding shores!—Hail, well-known scenes!
Ye rocks, whose lofty heads divide the clouds;
Ye shadowy groves and Gothic towers; ye ditties
Oft heard, and gales that breathe from orange-bowers,
Hail! hail!—Oh! what delight, our perils past,
To tread that soil we oft before have trod,
Feel at each step sweet recollections rising,
And weep for joy to feel them rise once more!

RH ADELGITHA *enters (richly drest) with Attendants.*

ADELGITHA.

Guiscard!

GUISCARD.

My Adelgitha!

ADELGITHA.

Welcome, conqueror!
Welcome to this fond heart!—Oh! Heaven! how bravely
The warrior looks, from foreign wars returned,
When propped upon his sword with blood incrusted,
He tells his country—"Rest, loved parent, rest;

Thy son has toiled, and *thou* may'st sleep securely!"—
My Prince! my hero!

GUISCARD.

Nor at Bari's siege
Looked *she* less glorious, who descried the javelin
Aimed at her husband's breast, and rushing forwards
Received it in her own! Then. . . .

ADELGITHA.

Silence! silence!

GUISCARD.

Then tearing from her wound the dart, she kist it,
Fainted, yet fainting smiled, and smiling cried,
"Happy *she* dies, who dies to save her husband!"—

ADELGITHA.

Blest am I that I did so!—Oh! that moment
Was worth my whole past life; nor would I barter
The scar that wound has left, for all the gems
Which ocean's waves have buried.

GUISCARD.

Noble creature!
How, how have I deserved so rich a treasure?

[*Embracing her.*

Enter MICHAEL-DUCAS, attended.

MICHAEL [*aside*].

Aye, seize the present hour! Ere long I'll dash
Your cup of joy with bitter.—Hail, Apulia!
I come to thank thee; but so vast thy claims,

No words can pay my debt. Then pardon, Prince,
If scant the praise appears, and cold the feelings
Of one but little used to be obliged.
Favours less great, I own, would please me better,
And my soul shrinks to count my obligations.

GUISCARD.

The man, who boasts a generous heart, ne'er grudges
That bliss to others, which himself esteems
Purest and best; the bliss of *doing good!*
~~Let narrow minds eye with suspicious scan~~
The extended hand and proffered heart, still dreading
To sign some future claim for granted favours.
But he, who scorns such calculating views,
And makes his own the rule of others' actions,
Takes freely that, which he'd as freely give;
Makes it his creed "to oblige and be obliged;"
Nor dreads the weight of gifts he'd rate as trifles,
Were they conferred on others by himself.
Think thus, Byzantium! Nor is't much I give thee;
'Tis but thine own, no more; Durazzo's thine,
And soon the Grecian crown....

MICHAEL.

Oh! generous spirit,
Which gives a crown, as 'twere a ~~orange~~ *trifle*! Shame,
Its fire should only warm Apulia's rocks!
Unsheath thy sword; drag from his diamond throne
Arabia's lord, and make his neck thy footstool;
~~Or crush some dozen sovereigns, and compound~~
~~From their joined realms one kingdom worthy thee~~!
Thou need'st but will it, and 'tis done.

GUISCARD.

No, Emperor;
I've nor the power, nor will!—Be mine to rule
Not kingdoms widely stretched, but justly governed:
Few be my subjects, so those few be happy;
And if their hearts are mine, I've realms enough.
What's large dominion, power, or wealth, or fame?
Love, love is all!—And oh! ye virgins, twine
Your ~~flowery~~ wreaths, and minstrels, ~~raise your song,~~
~~And~~ strike your ~~golden~~ lyres for HIM, ~~for HIM,~~
Who seeks no empire but his people's love;
Who fears no danger but his people's hate;
Who draws himself no glory from a throne,
But makes a throne seem glorious by his virtues.
Here break we off—

[*To* ADELGITHA, *who during these speeches seems to welcome the Knights.*]

Best love, I marvel much,
You ask not of that danger....

ADELGITHA [*alarmed*].

How?—What danger?

GUISCARD.

Thou hast not heard then....?

ADELGITHA.

Nothing!

GUISCARD.

'Tis no wonder,
For *real* merit's ever modest——Mark then;

Mark, and admire!—Hot was the fight!—Death ranged
Insatiate o'er the field, and his white courser
Dyed its mane red in blood. Groans, shrieks, prayers, curses
Commingled rent the air! Darts hid the sun,
And one transfix'd my steed. He fell!

ADELGITHA.

Oh! heavens!

GUISCARD.

Fell, and the usurper marked his fall! He reached me!
I saw his faulchion gleam! 'Twas rais'd! One moment,
And all was lost; when lo! a youth. . . .

ADELGITHA.

A youth?

GUISCARD.

Sprang from his horse; ~~bestrode me; fierce as guards~~
Her young the tigress, dealt he blows around,
Now here, now there, on this side, and on that,
Till his true sword cut through the usurper's casque,
Who on his courser's neck sank senseless!

ADELGITHA.

~~Gods~~! *Heavens!*

GUISCARD.

Then fled the Greeks full fast! The stripling raised me,
Gave me his steed, regained Durazzo, scaled
Its walls, unbarred the ponderous gates, and bade

The Imperial flag stream from its towers, loud shouting
—"Reign, long reign Michael-Ducas!"—

ADELGITHA.

Oh! blest youth!
Oh! gallant bearing!—Tell me, dear my Lord,
What happy mother boasts so brave a son?
How may I thank him best?—Oh! name him! name him!

GUISCARD [*smiling*].

That youth.... Behold him in Lothair.

ADELGITHA.

Was't he?
Oh! heart!—Was't he *indeed?*

GUISCARD.

He! none but he,
Whom Adelgitha placed about my person,
And whom she now must thank for Guiscard's life.
Advance, brave youth. *Lothair advances, L.C.*

ADELGITHA [*while* Lothair *kneels to her*].

I fostered, reared, and loved thee:
If thou hast cost me care, or ow'st me duty,
Thou hast discharged thy debt—
[*She takes a chain with a cross from her neck, and throws it round* Lothair's].
Still wear this jewel;
And while 'tis yours remember, when I gave it,
I blest the hour that you received existence,
Since you have lived to rescue Guiscard's life!

MICHAEL [*aside*].

Now should she weep!—Right!—What exhaustless rivers
Must female eyes contain!

LOTHAIR.

I fain would thank thee....
But my full heart.... [*rising*]——Oh! honoured, happy Guiscard,
I'll call from Heaven no blessings on thy head;
Thou hast them all, possessing Adelgitha.
He, on whom Heaven bestows a wife like her,
Whate'er his merits, must be still o'er-paid.

MICHAEL.

This praise so fervent....

LOTHAIR.

Can I praise her coldly,
When that I live, and that I *merit* life,
Are both her gifts?—Left at her father's gate
A speechless orphan....

ADELGITHA [*to* Lothair].

Cease, nor blame that virtue
So nice, to hear e'en praise too warm offends it.
[*Ironically to* Michael] Oh! Sir, 'twere excellent, did all like you
Inculcate morals, which like you they practised.

MICHAEL.

Such praise outstrips my merits—[*Aside*] By yon sun,
I'll be revenged, insulter!

R. Enter JULIAN.

JULIAN [*to* Guiscard, *who has been talking with* Tancred, *&c.*]
Prince, the council....

GUISCARD [*to* Michael].
I come!—Lothair, attend me!—For awhile,
Farewell, best love!—Warriors, farewell, and trust me,
The memory of your faith shall live unfading
In Guiscard's grateful heart!—Well have ye served me;
And while Apulia boasts such sons, her Genius
(Though hostile myriads storm her sea-beat coasts)
Shall hear them threaten with a smile of scorn,
Then with her trident plunge them in the billows.
Those swords, which struck so hard in foreign lands,
Shall strike with tenfold strength to guard their own:
And here I swear, while Guiscard rules Apulia,
Still shall each soldier say, who draws his sword,
—"My country's free; my Sovereign's kind and grateful;
"His cause is just.... and yonder's One *loves* justice!" [*Exit with* Lothair *and Knights.* R.

ADELGITHA [*going*].
My gallant Guiscard!

MICHAEL.
Lady, stay, and deign
Some moments' audience:—but alone!

ADELGITHA [*to her attendants, who go off*]. R.
Withdraw.

Manent ADELGITHA *and* MICHAEL-DUCAS.

ADELGITHA [*coldly*].

Speak, and be brief.

MICHAEL [*hypocritical*].

Oh! princely dame, unbend
That gloomy brow! thou see'st thy virtue's convert,
Grateful you've spared him that remorse, which tortures
Those, who pollute the shrine of female honour.
I've *witnessed* that remorse! That dying knight....

ADELGITHA.

What knight?

MICHAEL.

Some years are past, since at the chace
In Astra's wood I lost my way—Dercetus
Alone pursued my steps.. night's shades were rising,
When lo! a groan.... We hastened to the place..
A knight lay stabbed by robbers—"Come," he cried;
"Strangers, approach, and while I've breath to tell it,
Hear the confession of a guilty man,
And vouch for his remorse!"—Oh! then he told
A tale so sad....! A maid of noble birth
By solemn vows seduced.... abandoned.... left
To shame and anguish.... Heavy at that hour
Sat on his soul her wrongs!—He charged us find her,
Restore her letters, paint his grief, and bid her
Pray for the sinful soul of *George of Clermont!*—
The tale affects you, Princess!

ADELGITHA [*endeavouring to hide her emotion*].

Well it may!—
I cannot chuse. . . but pity. . . . that sad lady.

MICHAEL.

What pity *her*, whose guilty heart has revelled
In wanton love, and pleasure's wild excess?
Perhaps, her slips of youth forgot, on others
Those fetters now she binds, she broke herself!
Perhaps she rules some fond believing husband,
Who thinks her *now* a saint; but when he knows her,
He'll throw her from his bosom like a scorpion!
And *I'll* unmask. . . .

ADELGITHA [*hastily*].

The warrior named her not?

MICHAEL.

Name her? 'Twas needless;—for the damsel's letters,
So fond, so sad, so full of passion! speaking
In every line her love and shame so plainly. . . .!
This picture too. . though seventeen years since then
Have winged their flight, this swan-like neck must still
Be arched and fair; still must these lips of coral
Swell ripe and full; nor can these eyes have lost
All their dark brilliance——Please you look, fair Princess?
Nay look, I pray!

[*Forcing her to look at the picture; she casts an hasty glance on it, and starts away in terror—He proceeds in a tone of ironical softness*]

It seems you know these features?

[*In a terrible voice, while he grasps her by the arm*]

Now scorn me, if thou dar'st! [*Exit L.*

ADELGITHA,

[*after a pause, during which she seems petrified with horror, looks round her with a confused air, then strikes her forehead, and exclaims like one in despair*]

I'm lost! I'm lost! R H [*Exit.*

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

26

21

1

Adelgitha Letter

R. Clandia

Dercetus

ACT III.

SCENE—*The Palace Gardens.—On one side is a Bank, The Castle Towers are seen through the Trees in the Back-Ground.*

ADELGITHA *(much agitated) enters with a Letter, followed by* CLAUDIA *and* DERCETUS.

ADELGITHA [*to herself*].

This, this to *me?*—[*To Dercetus*]—'Tis well;—inform thy Lord,
Claudia shall bear my answer.—[*Aside*] ~~Fiends! Betrayed!~~

DERCETUS.

Humbly I take my leave. [*Exit.*

ADELGITHA [*giving way to her emotions*].

Oh! Claudia, Claudia,
I'm lost! betrayed!

~~CLAUDIA.~~

~~Most cruel chance, which threw you~~
~~Defenceless in his power!~~

ADELGITHA.

Read there, and learn
His insults, and *my* danger.

CLAUDIA [*looking on the letter*].

How?—An audience.....
Alone.... Within twelve hours..... Else, threats
that Guiscard
Shall know....

ADELGITHA [*in despair*].

There! there! shall know, shall scorn, shall hate me!

CLAUDIA.

I trust not so! Your heart-felt deep contrition
Your charms, your worth, his passion, all will plead
.....

ADELGITHA.

Thou think so, *thou* who *know'st* him? know'st the
value
He sets on female honour?—No! I'm lost!

CLAUDIA.

What must be done?—this scroll....

ADELGITHA.

'Tis my death warrant!

CLAUDIA.

Thou dar'st not disobey it.

ADELGITHA.

True; I *dare* not! X L.
Regions of flame, oh! boast ye fiercer torments,
Than to love virtue, yet not dare be virtuous,
And honour's votary, live the slave of shame!—
Hence with these doubts! I'll meet him.

CLAUDIA.

How?

ADELGITHA.

I'll meet him,
Sink at his feet, bathe them with tears, implore him
To spare a frantic wretch; and if he spurns
Me and my griefs.....

CLAUDIA.

What wilt thou *then* do?

ADELGITHA.

Die!
Die, Claudia, die! yes; let the worst befall me,
That last resource is left me still, a dagger.
Better to cease to feel, than feel to suffer,
And Death's less painful than a life of shame.—
Yet I'd fain live!—Oh! life's so sweet! Ye powers,
Who read the human soul, and long have read
Remorse in mine, melt ye his marble heart!

CLAUDIA.

Heaven grant it!—Yet this conference..... Such close parley,
Such frequent meetings well may raise suspicion....

ADELGITHA [*alarmed*].

True!—true!

CLAUDIA.

Should any curious ear surprise
Your converse.....

ADELGITHA.

I were lost!

CLAUDIA.

A private passage
Leads to St. Hilda's Cave.....

ADELGITHA.

Right!—There securely ...
Unseen.... unheard .... Oh! shame! and shall I steal
From Guiscard's sight to meet the wretch, who dared
Insult my hearing.... though the skies rained fire,
I would not!—Lo! where Guiscard comes; and surely
In search of me!—Oh! in that hour I see
Those eyes, which seek me now, contemptuous shun me!
If I've a dagger and a heart, I swear,
That hour's my last!

CLAUDIA.

Oh! Heaven!

ADELGITHA [*firmly*].

'Tis said! 'Tis sworn!
I cannot, will not live, unloved by Guiscard!
Could he forgive.... Who knows? Twelve years of truth,
Of lasting love, and deep remorse.... I'll dare it.

CLAUDIA.

What mean'st thou?

ADELGITHA.

'Tis the crisis of my fate.
Withdraw.

CLAUDIA [*anxious*].

Dear friend, be cautious!...

ADELGITHA.

Cautious, say'st thou?
I'm desperate, Claudia, desperate! Leave me! leave me. [*Exit* Claudia. R. H. E.

L. H. E. *Enter* GUISCARD.

GUISCARD. Comes down L.

At length I'm free! How tedious seemed the duties
Which kept me from thy sight; but now once more
I live for love and thee. Why darts thine eye
That piercing glance, as it would search my soul?
Speak, my best love?

ADELGITHA.

Thou hast a heart, my Guiscard,
Firm, generous, just.....

GUISCARD.

That heart is Adelgitha's.

ADELGITHA.

Not Virtue's *more?*

GUISCARD.

Not *more;* as much; for surely
Virtue and Adelgitha form but one.

ADELGITHA.

Oh! would that now thy heart were mine, mine *wholly!*
Then pity's sighs should drown the voice of Justice,
And angry Honour's flame be quenched with tears.

GUISCARD.

What means that wish? Thou surely would'st not plead
The cause of *Vice?*

ADELGITHA.

I'd plead the cause of *weakness.*

GUISCARD.

Whose cause?

ADELGITHA.

A woman's and a wretch!

GUISCARD.

What asks she?

ADELGITHA.

Peace! honour! life!—And hopes them all from *thee!*

GUISCARD.

From me?—More plainly speak.

ADELGITHA.

Among my damsels
Is one, whose faults of youth....I blush to name.
When on her cheek Sixteen had scarcely shed
The bright reflection of its roseate wings,
While yet she knew not guile, but thought mankind
Pure as her heart, (for *then* her heart *was* pure)
A wounded youth beneath her father's roof
Found kind protection.—Long she nursed him, watched him,
Pitied, and soothed: and when she saw *him* suffer,
The fond thing wept herself!—He was a *villain!*

Prayers, sighs, tears, oaths, nothing was spared to win her;
She listened, and believed!—*Her* heart was *weak*,
She fell; *his* heart was *false*, he fled!

GUISCARD.

Best love!
Thy story both affects and pains. Oh! spare me
The tale of sorrows, which admit no cure.
Her doom is fixed; no power can now recall it;
~~Honour, (like life) once lost, is lost for ever!~~
And she, who rashly leaps its fatal bounds,
Like the sad ghost, who floats o'er Lethe's ~~billows~~,
~~Goes to return no more!~~

ADELGITHA.

Oh! doom too harsh,
Which bars out hope, and seals the lips of mercy!
If all think thus, what then avails repentance?
Why waste brief life in tears? 'Twere wiser plunge
Headlong in guilt, reject that useless virtue
Which others prize not, and in pleasure's bowl
Drown conscience and its horrors.

GUISCARD.

Were this life
The *only* life, perhaps, 'twere wisely argued.
But there's another world, more good, more happy;
A treasury, where each tear repentance sheds,
Is stored with precious care, as men store pearls;
Where conscience, *here* guilt's bitterest foe, becomes
Its firmest advocate, and hours of pain
Are paid with Heavenly bliss and life eternal.
~~Such fruits repentance bears~~!

ADELGITHA.

Oh! Guiscard! Guiscard!
How much more perfect wert thou, could'st thou pardon
Men for not being *angels!*

GUISCARD.

Is't so hard then
To love sweet virtue? In *my* sight so loathsome
Vice seems, her aspect makes me start in horror,
And marvel men have *courage* to be guilty.
But to thy damsel's tale—Her lover fled....?

ADELGITHA.

Remorse ne'er left her more—and oh! such anguish....
Such floods of tears....

GUISCARD.

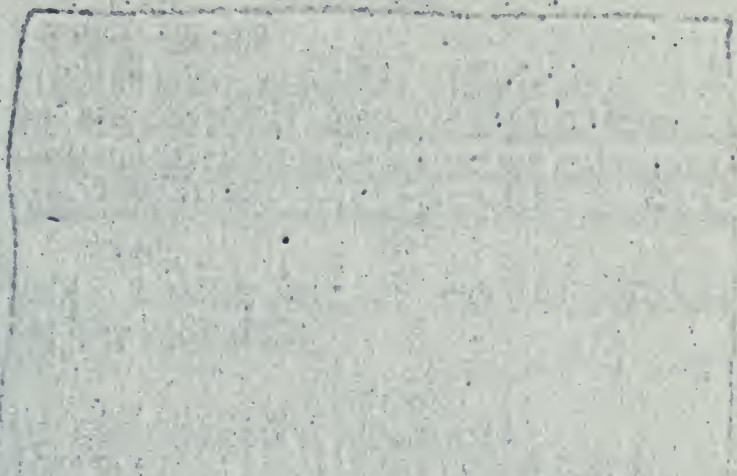
I fear, they flowed not long!
In Who once has fallen, will fall again; and soon
No doubt the tears, which her first lover caused her,
Some second kist away.

ADELGITHA.

No, Guiscard, no!
Though suitors young, and fair, and rich, and noble,
Sighed at her feet, and vowed themselves her subjects,
As Dian's statue cold she heard their suit,
And for that false one's sake rejected all.

GUISCARD.

Best had a convent's gloom....



3

L. H. E. Lothair
Michael Ducas

ADELGITHA.

But then came one
So past all praise, so perfect! whom to see
And love was equal! ~~One, whom Nature fashioned~~
~~With curious care, and when her work was finished,~~
~~Cried—"Lo! my masterpiece!"~~—This wond'rous
—man,
Born to be loved, and love! This man, o'er whom
You hold much power....

GUISCARD.

Ha!—No! thou can'st not mean it!
Thou can'st not *wish*, I should exert that power
To place pollution in his arms, and bind
With Hymen's sacred bands a wanton's temples.
The damsel loves?—Ne'er let her hope to know
Those best of earthly blessings, fair renown,
Respect, and love of those whose love's an honour:
Be those bright gems to deck *her* brow reserved,
That virgin bride, chaste spouse, and blameless
parent,
Whose husband counts his wife Heaven's choicest
gift,
And son ne'er blushed to hear his mother mentioned
She loves, thou say'st? *Dares* love a man of honour?
Were she his wife.....

ADELGITHA.

She is!—[*hastily, and with great emotion.*]

GUISCARD.

What? Holds my court
One man so dead to shame, so blind with passion,
He with a wanton shares his name?

ADELGITHA.

Oh! Heaven!———
He knew not. . . .

GUISCARD.

Knew not?

ADELGITHA.

Knows not now. . . .

GUISCARD.

What say'st thou?

ADELGITHA.

Her passion for her lord . . Her pure strict morals . .
Twelve years, in virtue past, concealed. . . .

GUISCARD.

Oh! monstrous!
Twelve years concealed? Oh! art, that mocks belief!
Think you, a second fault absolves a former,
And shall the *hypocrite* make clear the *wanton*?
Think you! . . . . Twelve years? What! did she feign so well then?
Was she so arch a mistress in dissembling?
Clasped to her dotard's heart did ne'er one word,
One sigh betray. . . . the fond dupe moves my pity!
When in her breast he poured his dearest secrets,
She had one mystery still he ne'er could pierce:
Love as he might, her heart had still one fold
Which set all trust, all fondness at defiance:
And haply, when he'd marvel at her virtue,
(Her virtue pure from doubt, and past all praise,)
She'd smile! and tender thanks! and joy in secret
To see her fool so cheated, and so pleased.———
Fye! fye! 'tis odious! X to R H

ADELGITHA [*extremely agitated*].

Yet one word. . . . one question. . . .
Say, 'twere *thy* case; would'st thou refuse all pardon. . . .
All trust. . . . all love . . . . . should some most dear relation. . . .
Thy friend of youth. . . . thy much-loved sister. . . .

GUISCARD [*violently*]

Mine!
Proceed not!—Mine!—My sister!—Mine!—Oh! Gods!
Were I so curst, and owned I such a shame,
And were my heart so base as still to love her,
I'd tear that heart out!

ADELGITHA.

Guiscard!

GUISCARD.

Let her fly!
(Fly where she might, she'd bear her worst foe with her,
The sense of shame deserved!) Far let her fly
From all the world, but most of all from *me*;
For should I find her, with my sword I'd drain
Her veins of that hot blood, which stained my own.
Let her in cloistered gloom, in prayer and penance,
Waste her sad days, abandoned, wretched, raving,
By all abhorred, renounced, despised, forgotten;
Till crushed by shame, and frantic with despair,
Her own rash hand. . . .

ADELGITHA [*with a cry of pain*].

My heart will burst!

GUISCARD.

Just Heavens!
My love! My life!

ADELGITHA.

Fear not!—A sudden faintness....

GUISCARD.

Nay, but thou'rt wond'rous pale!—and no one's near....
Rest on this bank!—'Tis well!—I'll fly for help....
[*going*]

ADELGITHA [*seated on the bank*].

No! No!

GUISCARD.

I'll straight return!—Hoa! Claudia! Claudia! [*Exit.*

ADELGITHA [*after a pause, clasps her hands, and raises them to Heaven*].

No aid!—No mercy!—No resource!
[*She remains as if stupefied.*]

LOTHAIR *advances through the Trees.*

LOTHAIR [*to himself*].

Yes, Nature,
Thou art most beauteous!—This fair grove... those flowers
So richly dyed.... and oh! that balmy gale,
How breathed it o'er my soul delicious langour!
Ah! heavenly Imma, half these charms are yours,
And that *you* breathe it, makes the air so sweet:
Your magic presence lends the rills their music,

Inspires the birds, stains every flower more glowing,
And sheds celestial light o'er all the groves!
But soft!—the Princess!

ADELGITHA.

Oh! Lothair!

LOTHAIR.

How! weeping?—[*throws himself at her feet.*]
Oh! pardon this presumption! Can I witness
Those tears, nor ask their cause, and seek to dry
them?
Can I assist . . . . console . . . . relieve . . . .

ADELGITHA.

Relief?
My woes admit of none!

LOTHAIR.

Oh! say not so!
My arm, my soul are thine.—~~I'll search . . . . I'll find . . . . .~~
~~Some means may cure be found~~ . . . . Oh! deign to
trust me!
Thou canst not doubt the creature of thy bounty;
The orphan youth whose life's thy gift; and gladly
He'd lose that life to serve thee!—yes, ye thunders,
Bursting, accuse my crime; and aim, ye lightnings,
At this ungrateful breast your fiercest darts,
Whene'er I doubt to shed my heart's best blood,
To spare those radiant eyes one tear of anguish!

L. H. E. MICHAEL-DUCAS *appears in the Back-ground.*

ADELGITHA.

Thou generous youth!

MICHAEL.

How! kneeling at her feet?

ADELGITHA.

Yes! yes! I'll trust thee! Thou shalt know my danger;
Then counsel, aid.... and save me if thou canst.
There is a secret....
[*Here* Michael-Ducas *interposes between them.*]
—Ha! Byzantium!

MICHAEL.

Soh!
My thoughts then wronged you not! Your heart it seems
Is not such ice but *youthful* fires can melt it?
You counted me your dupe? No, no! I guest
Some happier rival steeled your heart, not virtue;
And when this morn I marked your fond emotion,
Your blush while round his neck you hung yon jewel,
That rival stood confest—'Tis plain! confirmed!
Marry! the scene's well chosen!——Murmuring streams....
Soft beds of fragrant flowers.. convenient shades..
And amorous ring-doves cooing o'er your heads,
While your love kneels before you....!

~~ADELGITHA.~~

~~Base suspicion!~~
~~Gods! do I live to hear it?~~

4

Guiscard
Claudia
Julian
6 Knights

R.U.B

LOTHAIR.

Mark me, Prince!
Had living man but Imma's father spoken
Those words, my sword had struck him dead already.
What *means* thy charge?—Thou canst not give it credit,
Thyself!—Her spotless virtue....

MICHAEL.

Hers? *Her* virtue?
Ha! ha!—Tell others that strange tale! [*laughing spitefully.*]

ADELGITHA.

Oh! heavens!

MICHAEL.

For *me*, I've found her art!—The spell is broken!
I know her frail and false....

LOTHAIR.

Now blisters seize
His tongue, who calls her so!

ADELGITHA [*anxiously.*]

Lothair! Lothair!
This warmth destroys me!

LOTHAIR.

Should I bear with patience
To hear thee wronged, thou best and purest?—No!
~~My blood's on fire, and *should* be~~: he's no man,
Who listens calmly, while a woman's slandered.

[*To* Michael] *She* frail? Oh! insult past enduring!
—*She?* Unheard-of falsehood!

MICHAEL [*furious*].

How!

LOTHAIR.

Yes, Emperor, yes:
Whate'er thy rank, I'm for this hour thy equal.
I say, 'tis false; and though an angel spoke it,
I'd still repeat—"the charge is false as hell!"—

MICHAEL.

What! this to *me?* Thou contradict me, *thou?*
Soars thy presumption then a pitch so high,
Minion, because thy silken locks have snared
That fond-one's heart....

LOTHAIR.

Oh! gods!—Yet.... yet be wise!—
The rage which boils my blood....

MICHAEL.

Dost think, I fear it?
Let it blaze forth thy rage; 'twill move my laughter:
And if thou need'st *more* insults to provoke thee,
This makes the measure full.—[*striking him.*]

LOTHAIR [*drawing his sword.*]

Draw! draw this moment!—[*frantic with passion*]
Draw and defend thyself.

MICHAEL.

This to thy heart, boy!—[*they fight*]

ADELGITHA.

Help! help!

[Lothair's *sword breaks, and he is beaten on his knees*]

LOTHAIR.

Oh! faithless sword!

ADELGITHA.

He falls!

MICHAEL [*raising his sword to stab him.*]

Thou diest!

ADELGITHA [*throwing herself before* Lothair.]

Hold! tyrant, hold! or stab him through my bosom!

GUISCARD [*without.*]

Speed, Claudia, speed!

ADELGITHA [*starting.*]

My husband's voice!

MICHAEL [*menacing.*]

He comes!
Now tremble!

Guiscard *enters hastily, followed by* Claudia, Julian, *and Guards.*

GUISCARD.

Clash of arms!—How's this?—Lothair?
Byzantium too? Their swords unsheathed, ~~their eyes~~
~~Like blazing lamps through rage?~~—Explain ~~this mystery~~;
Speak, Princess!

ADELGITHA.

Guiscard.... Terror chokes my voice:
I cannot!—[*she leans on* Claudia.]

MICHAEL [*soothing.*]

Yet what fear'st thou now, dear lady?
The danger's past; thou'rt safe. Dost mark? *Quite* safe.
'Tis *I* who tell thee so, thy friend, thy servant,
Whose proudest boast will be, *He saved thy honour!*
—[*expressively.*]

ADELGITHA [*comprehending him.*]

Ha!—then there's hope again!

GUISCARD.

Her honour! Saved it!....
From whom?

MICHAEL.

I wandered near this spot, when shrieks
Alarmed my hearing; hither swift I sped,
And lo! thy wife by ruffian grasp detained....
That ruffian was Lothair!

GUISCARD.

Lothair?

ADELGITHA [*struck with horror and surprise.*]

Oh! monster!

~~LOTHAIR [confounded]~~

~~How! here!~~

MICHAEL.

He drew his faulchion: mine already

Was bated in Virtue's cause, and fierce we fought
Till by thy footsteps scared....

LOTHAIR.

Oh! monstrous fraud;
Which owns no fellow! Where shall Truth find refuge,
Driven from her purest throne and fittest shelter,
The hearts and lips of monarchs *?—Princely Guiscard,
~~By that eternal fire which burns above us,~~
If e'er I harboured in my breast one wish,
One thought injurious to thy consort's virtue,
Or view'd her with one glance less chaste or holy
Than dying hermits view their patron-saints,
May Heaven's red arm.... But why assert my innocence?
The Princess knows it; to *her* lips I'll trust me.

MICHAEL.

And by that test *I'll* stand——Speak Adelgitha,
Thy suffrage none can doubt: declare the truth,
Unmask the traitor, and *confirm my tale.*—[*significantly.*]

ADELGITHA.

No, I can bear no more.—Unmask the traitor?
I *will*; and show his guilt so black, so hideous,
The sickening sun shall veil his orb in clouds,
And think mankind no longer worth his care.

* "Chez les rois on devrait retrouver de la bonne foi fut elle bannie du reste de la terre."

Frederic II.—Hist. de la Guerre de Sept Ans.

Hear me, my Lord!- If there is faith in woman,
I now assert Lothair is. . . .

MICHAEL

[*interrupting her, and showing the picture, unseen by all but* Adelgitha, *on whom the attention of the rest is entirely fixed.*]

Lady! lady!
Beware!

GUISCARD *and* LOTHAIR.

Speak! speak!

MICHAEL [*pointing to the picture, and threatening.*]

Beware!

ADELGITHA [*hesitating*].

Lothair. . . . is. . . . *guilty.* [*Falls on* Claudia's *bosom.*]

LOTHAIR.

Gods! did I hear aright?

MICHAEL [*aside*].

I triumph!

GUISCARD.

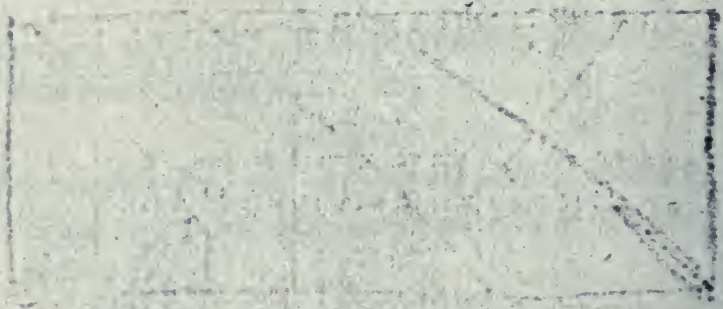
Miscreant!
Hoa! Julian.—Bear yon villain hence, and chain him
Deep in the Western Tower.

ADELGITHA [*entreating.*]

He saved your life!

GUISCARD.

To load it with disgrace? Ten thousand lives
Could not repay the outrage! May all torments
E'er forged by sleepless tyrants still pursue



5

R. Emma
Julian

hat wretch, who winds him round a heart, more
safely
To steal its quiet, and to stab its honour:
Who basely trifling with a brave man's peace,
And wrapped in friendship's sacred garb, exults
To strew the nuptial couch with shame and grief,
And thinks a friend's disgrace his proudest triumph
Bear him away.

LOTHAIR.

One word——By what strange spell
Yon dark magician in his chains has bound me,
I know not; but I know myself most guiltless,
And thee, Prince, most deceived—I'll say no more;
Do with me what thou wilt; whate'er thou dost,
The memory of thy bounties past shall never
Die in thy servant's heart; the axe, that kills
My life, shall spare that grateful love I bear thee;
E'en at the block I'll bless thy gracious name,
Pray that thou ne'er may'st know I perished guiltless,
And plead in yonder world of truth and peace
My Sovereign's cause with Him, to whom he sent me.

[*To* ADELGITHA *sternly.*]

For thee, who....

[*He stops, crosses over to her, takes off the jewel which she gave him, restores it with a look of mingled grief and anger, and goes off in silence.* Julian *and Guards follow him.*]

ADELGITHA [*aside.*]

Death is sure less painful!—Guiscard....
My bosom bleeds—my brain turns round!—Lothair....
His youth.. his worth.... I know not what I say..
But spare him!

GUISCARD.

Think, my love, how base the crime
Of him thou bidst me spare! His outrage wronged
Not thee alone, but all thy sex in thee,
That sex, which should have claimed his best protection.
Who strikes his dagger in a female's heart
Acts kinder, than who stains that female's honour,
Death being happier than a shameful life,
Since she who lives to shame but lives to suffer.

MICHAEL.

Oh! true! most true!—[*Aside to* Adelgitha] Thou hear'st him, Princess?

ADELGITHA [*aside.*]

Fiend!
[*To* Guiscard] And can then Adelgitha sue in vain
To Guiscard? Can my tears....

MICHAEL.

Those tears are fruitless;
Thy lord is firm: and while you sue, fair Princess,
Forget not, that I hold your suit an insult
To *me*, the accuser, *me*.—[*In a low voice*] Speak one more word,
And all's revealed.——I hate that boy——He dies!

ADELGITHA.

Why then my fate is fixed! Hope, fare thee well!
I'll cease to weary heaven with prayers for blessings:
Beset with foes. . caught in the toils. . distracted. . . .
I'll pray no more, or only pray to die!
Death heals all wounds; with life all sorrow ceases,
And Heaven will show that mercy, man denies!

[*Exit wildly.*

GUISCARD.

[illegible] Claudia, follow. [*Exit* Claudia.

MICHAEL.

Ha! this strong emotion. . . .
These tears. . . . this frantic anguish. . . . in some eyes
Would seem suspicious. . . .

GUISCARD.

Not in mine, Byzantium,
Which look on mean suspicions as on crimes.
I scorn the man, whose selfish pride it flatters
To think all truth and goodness live confined
Within the narrow bounds of his own bosom.
That which I would not stoop to do myself,
I judge, that others would not stoop to do.
I trust, that still the world contains some virtue,
Had rather still be wronged than still suspect,
And hold it due to man, to Heaven, and justice,
To judge the hearts of others by my own *.

MICHAEL.

Methinks, Lothair might make you justly doubt

* "Mon cœur, répoussant ces soupçons criminels,
"Aime à juger par lui du reste des mortels." VOLTAIRE.

The *prudence* of this system; well might raise
That boy's ingratitude some slight regret
For lavished care and bounty misapplied.

GUISCARD.

No, Emperor; I regret not, what I've done,
But that his vice prevents my doing *more*.
Twelve years I cherished that delightful thought;
—"Virtue was his, and that to *me* he owed!"—
The dream is flown; but shall I count as noth
A dream so long, so flattering while it lasted?
Can *his* foul actions stain *my* fair intent,
Or does his falsehood make my act less generous?
Of man's ingratitude let those complain,
Whose bounty flows to serve themselves, not others:
He ne'er thinks his kindness ill repaid
Who acts, as virtue bids, for virtue's sake.

MICHAEL.

I must perforce admire such lofty thoughts;
Yet more admire the theory, than the practice.
Farewell, Apulia! still pursue thy system;
Still think all men are just, all women faithful;
Still fly conviction's light; still love, still trust,
Still find thyself deceived.... but ne'er grow wiser.

[*Exit M.*

GUISCARD.

Go, narrow heart! I loathe thy selfish prudence!—
This wretched youth.... so free from taint his con-
duct....
'Tis wond'rous strange!—But Adelgitha said it!—
He's guilty; 'tis past doubt!—[*going*]

Enter IMMA.

IMMA.

Stay, princely Guiscard,
And soothe a wretch's anguish!

GUISCARD.

Beauteous Imma,
Why flow those tears?

IMMA.

A fearful tale has reached me!
He's false! his life is forfeit!—Oh! that thought
Struck like a dagger to my heart!—I shrieked,
And wild with anguish, hither flew to plead
For one.... the falsest.... dearest.... for Lothair

GUISCARD.

What! plead for one, whose crime....

IMMA.

I know it all;
His crime, its penalty, and *my* despair!
But though *his* heart is false, mine still is true;
Still, still, though fall'n, Lothair is Imma's angel!
Oh! judge from this how vast my love's excess;
I know him faithless, and adore him still.

GUISCARD.

And did Lothair possess so rich a gem
As Imma's heart, and throw that gem away?
~~Oh! double treachery! This silence alone~~
~~Betrays.~~

IMMA.

What have I done!—Oh! thoughtless girl!—

Forget my words!—forget my wrongs, my love,
And only heed my tears and my despair!
Spare him! oh! spare him!

GUISCARD.

Cease, unhappy fair-one,
To urge a suit, I cannot, must not grant.
The law will claim....

IMMA.

Yet may thy sovereign power
O'er-rule that law's decree...:

GUISCARD.

No, Princess, no.
While we have laws, those laws must be obeyed;
And fruitless 'twere, that Justice bound a fillet
O'er her impartial eyes, if royal power
Could make her scales incline, as humour swayed.
It must not be.

IMMA.

Oh! Heaven!

R. Enter JULIAN.

JULIAN.

A Grecian vessel
Rides in the port, my Prince, and brings, 'tis said,
Terms of submission from the rebel Emperor,
Vanquish'd Alexius.

GUISCARD.

Straight I come— [Julian *retires up the Stage.*

IMMA.

Oh! Guiscard!

Leave me not thus!——Lothair!——One look of mercy....
One word of hope....

GUISCARD.

Could you peruse my heart,
Princess, you'd know, a king's most painful moments
Are, when he sees such tears, and must not dry them.
Too blest were monarchs, if when Grief implores,
They dared indulge that pity, which they feel.
But he, who wisely thinks, and justly governs,
If prudence and compassion strive, forgets not,
Mercy, though sweet, can but relieve a few,
But justice is that good, which blesses all. [*Exit R.*

IMMA.

He leaves me to despair!—Lost! wretched maid,
Where shall I turn me!—Ah! how changed my prospects,
From those so beauteous, which were mine this morn!
Lothair returned..... was faithful..... and was Imma's;
He's false... his life is lost... and mine's a blank!
Thus on the clouds Sicilian swains admire
The gorgeous show, Morgana's wand has raised:
Temples, with emerald domes and ruby pillars,
Dazzle their wondering sight; but while they gaze
The spell dissolves, and all the fairy fabric
Melts into vacant air.——Undone! undone!

R.
Act

JULIAN.

He's gone, and none observes us.—Hear me, Princess!

IMMA.

Oh! leave me to my grief!

JULIAN.

I come to soothe it.

IMMA.

How? Speak!

JULIAN.

I guard Lothair....

IMMA.

And wilt thou save him?
Say, "yes," and I'll adore thee!

JULIAN.

Born in Spain,
I languish for my native land, and wilt thou
Provide such sums as may from want secure me,
This night I'll fly from Guiscard and Otranto,
And make Lothair the partner of my fate!

IMMA.

Oh! words of rapture!—Speed thy flight, good fellow!
My wealth, my gems, rich diamonds, blushing rubies,
And chains of pearl, which decked a Persian queen,
All, all are thine

JULIAN.

Beneath the Western Tower
Soon as 'tis dark, expect me! Thine own hand
Shall break thy lover's chains——Hark! some one comes:
Farewell till night. Be cautious!— [*Exit.*

IMMA.

He shall live, then!
Lothair shall live!—But oh! he's false!——No matter.
He lives, and lives through *me!*—The rest I'll heed not.
Oh! could my heart, laid bleeding on the scaffold,
Redeem thy life, Lothair, I'd gladly rend
The trembler from my breast, and tell thee, dying,
—"See, false-one, see, how fond a heart you stabbed!"— *Exit.*

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

ACT IV.

Scene—*A Gothic Apartment—Tapers burning.*

Enter MICHAEL-DUCAS *and* CLAUDIA.

MICHAEL [*holding a letter*].

She has judged wisely!—Had my threats been scorned,
This night, though 'twere my last, had made her story
Public as the air she breathes—" St. Hilda's cavern?"—
" While Guiscard's at the banquet?"—'Tis enough.

CLAUDIA.

Oh! send some words of comfort to my friend!
Lothair...

MICHAEL.

She loves him!

CLAUDIA [*eagerly*].

By my hopes of Heaven....

MICHAEL.

Well! well!—I know not.... O'er my heart, 'tis certain,
She holds strange power!—Perhaps, her prayers may move me

1

Michael Ducas Letter - Daggers

R. Claudia

Guiscard written for you

L. Alciphron

To spare Lothair, repress my fatal passion,
And yield those letters, which..... But should she
fail me....

CLAUDIA.

She will not, be assured.—Oh! Prince, shew mercy,
And when thou need'st it, Heaven will show it thee!
[*Exit. R.*

MICHAEL.

Go, thou dull thing, and from experience learn,
That Michael ne'er forgave, where once he hated.
—"St. Hilda's Cave."—'Twill suit my purpose
well!—
Close to the sea.... But lo! Apulia comes!—
Ha! Alciphron?

Enter GUISCARD [*with a Parchment*] *and* ALCIPHRON.

GUISCARD.

Offers so fair deserve
Acceptance, and I'll urge it strongly, doubt not.
Wait thou apart!

ALCIPHRON.

Humbly I thank your Highness. [*Exit. L.*

GUISCARD.

Health to Byzantium's Emperor! For that title
At length is thine not more in right than fact.

MICHAEL.

Indeed?—Brought Alciphron....?

GUISCARD.

Alexius owns

Thy star's ascendant, and resigns the purple
On certain terms.....

MICHAEL.

Terms? Dares the slave prescribe
Terms to his Sovereign?

GUISCARD.

Still Byzantium's his,
And ere 'twere thine by force, much blood would flow.
To save that blood (and sure his heart it honours)
Alexius proffers to throw wide his portals,
So thou'lt engage to spare his life, and those,
Whose names this scroll contains.

MICHAEL [*reading*].

"Constantius"—"Phocas"—
"Gratian"—Men potent with Byzantium's rabble;
Who bear tow'rds me such deadly hate as tigers
Bear tow'rds the crocodile—and shall they live
To prate of slaughtered sons and wives dishonoured,
And with such piteous tales excite the croud
Again to hurl me from my throne? No, no!
Such men I dare not pardon.

GUISCARD.

Dare not, say'st thou?
~~Oh! phrase ill suited to imperial lips!~~
Kings should fear nothing but deserving censure,
And he who dares not *pardon*, should not *reign*.

MICHAEL.

Gods! give me patience!—Is't not then enough
To know yon cave contains a sleeping lion,

But must I wait his rousing to dispatch him,
And feel the monster's teeth, before I stab?
By Heaven, 'twere better ne'er to see Byzantium,
Than see it in such fear, and spread my couch
Nightly on snakes!

GUISCARD.

And art thou yet to learn,
E'en snakes, if gently used, are rendered harmless
And dance obedient to their tasker's flute?
Restored to power, shed grace and bounty round thee;
~~With love meet hatred, conquer frowns with fa-~~
~~vours;~~
Be the world's friend, and none will be thy foes.

MICHAEL.

What! Be the friend of those, who from my grasp
My sceptre snatched, and drove me forth an exile?
Oh! were I like Olympian Jove enthroned
With scorn I'd turn me from the ambrosial banquet,
To launch 'gainst those I hate destroying thunders,
And shower my vengeance down in fiery floods.

GUISCARD.

Is such indeed thy wish?—Whate'er my injuries,
Grant, ye blest heavens, that Guiscard ne'er may bend
His knee at dark *Revenge's* blood-stained altar!
High on a rock his horrid temple stands,
Of burning iron built, and closely paved
With human hearts, which at each step he tramples.
But tremble, fiend! Tears shed in vain have sapped
Thy rock's foundations; Hate and Fear prepare

Their subterranean fires, which, when they burst,
Will hurl thee piece-meal to the winds of Heaven,
And where thou fall'st no dew shall bless the sod——
But fair *Forgiveness* (robed in vestal-white,
Which speck of blood ne'er stained) her shrine of chrystal,
Her balmy bowers, and ever-gushing fountains,
Quits for the embattled field.—There, when she finds
Some foe o'erthrown, she from her poppy-garland
Shakes dews oblivious on his fainting brows;
And bathes his wounds with tears; and binds them gently
With her torn hair; and if she fails to save him,
She sings so sweet a requiem o'er his corse,
That Hate relenting throws his sword away,
And sinks upon that breast 'twas raised to wound!

MICHAEL.

Yet when Lothair to-day....

GUISCARD.

His crime was public,
Nor dares my justice pardon crimes, save those
Committed 'gainst myself. But when such faults
As those now charged upon the Byzantine's....

MICHAEL.

Their fault was great; neglect of subject-duty.

GUISCARD.

Have subjects duties, kings have duties too.

MICHAEL.

And *I*....?—I guess your meaning, Prince!

2

L Rainulf

R. Dexcetus

GUISCARD.

There needs then
No plainer words to speak i—' Twill suffice
To say, that mercy now must seem mere prudence.
All must approve your yielding, since . . . .

MICHAEL [*looking on the parchment*].

What this?
The patriarch Priscillian? that false priest,
Who rudely tore the diadem from my brow,
And bound it round my rival's?—Critias, too!
Eudoxus! Cleon!—[*furious*]—Now, by Heaven!
Not one,
Not one of them shall live! the slaves! the traitors!
Byzantium mine one hour, thus, thus I'll use them,
And strew their limbs thus round me!—[*tearing the parchment.*]

GUISCARD.

'Tis enough.
Hoa! Alciphron!

Enter ALCIPHRON.

GUISCARD [*pointing to the parchment*].

Read there your answer!

ALCIPHRON [*starting*].

Prince!

GUISCARD.

When first your exiled sovereign sought my aid,
I saw his sufferings and forgot his faults,
Pitied the monarch and excused the man.
I thought too, in Adversity's rough school

He sure had learnt some lessons, which might teach him
To govern well, if e'er again he governed.
I was deceived!—Michael rejects your terms:
Yet tell Alexius this from me—If e'er
On Michael's side again I draw my faulchion,
May my right arm sink withered!

MICHAEL [*stamping in rage*].

How?—Confusion!

ALCIPHRON.

Then, tyrant, do thy worst; we fear thee not!
[*To Guiscard*]—But since from *him* estranged, oh! let Alexius
Hope, that Apulia's aid....

GUISCARD [*with dignity*].

Presumptuous Greek,
Urge that bold suit no further!—Guiscard's sword
Shall ne'er be drawn in an usurper's cause.
Whate'er his faults, there stands your rightful monarch;
And though *my* arms no more oppose Alexius,
Still shall he find ere long, celestial vengeance
Pursue the rebel, who dethroned his king.
Quit thou my realm: no more! [*Exit* Alciphron.
[*To Michael*]—Prince, thou hast heard me,
And here our ill-assorted union ends.
No further aid.....

MICHAEL [*malignant*].

Nay, show thy spite at once,
And send me to the usurper's throne in chains.
Durazzo shall reward thee!

3

Julian Lamps

L.U.C. Lothair

Irmma

=Ready at Lamps=

GUISCARD.

Emperor, no!
What Guiscard once has given, he ne'er resumes.
Durazzo's yours; 'twas conquered in your name,
And thither safely shall my barks conduct you:
That done, my service ends. To gain Byzantium,
What further course you chuse . . . . .

MICHAEL.

Should that course prosper,
I'll first employ my power to wreak on thee
My vengeance for this scorn!—There lies my gage,
In token of defiance, and that hatred,
Which here I swear shall to the grave pursue thee,
Deep, deadly, and unchanged.

GUISCARD.

Were all the sceptres
Young Ammon won, thus prostrate thrown before me,
I'd stoop less willing than to seize this pledge
Of lasting feuds between us!—Stretch to the utmost
Thy power to vex Apulia and its lord:
~~With barks, like locust-clouds, o'erspread the ocean;~~
~~Rob all thy realms of men, and at one effort~~
~~Pour thy whole population on our coasts:~~
~~Still shalt thou see thy squadrons (like ripe corn~~
~~Beneath the reaper's scythe) laid low, encountering~~
The patriot subjects of a patriot prince,
Who loves his people, whom his people love.—
Skulk as thou may'st behind thy brazen bulwarks
Of hired Varangians and degenerate Greeks,
I'll *find* thee, doubt not; ~~how my desperate passage~~

~~Through swords and shields~~; nor shall my arm know rest,
Till on thy casque my trusty sword has cleft
Byzantium's crown in twain.

MICHAEL.

I'll hear no more!—[*drawing a dagger*]
Vain boaster, die!—[*attempts to stab* Guiscard, *who wrests the dagger from him.*]

GUISCARD.

Ha!—[*A pause, after which he returns the dagger.*]
Take thy steel again,
And use it to a nobler end.—[Michael *stamps in rage.*]—How now?

Enter RAINULF.

RAINULF.

Lothair has fled, my Prince!—the traitor Julian
Has loosed his chains, and shares his flight.

GUISCARD.

Pursue them,
And straight inform me, should Lothair be found.
[*Exit* Rainulf.

Oh! lend his feet your speed, ye winds, and spare me
The sad necessity of shedding blood
Still to my heart so precious.—Prince, farewell;
We meet no more, except we meet in battle,
Where one of us must fall.—~~Meanwhile live thou~~
~~Wronging and wronged, betraying and betrayed,~~

And boast of slaughtered foes and power unbridled:
While *I* (with juster thought) esteem it nobler
To gain one friend, than crush a thousand foes;
Boast, that I reign despotic o'er my passions,
And hold, man's proudest conquest is . . . *himself!*

[*Exit.*

MICHAEL.

Aye! triumph now!—But soon thy haughty front
Shall strike the earth in anguish—Now, Dercetus!

Enter DERCETUS.

MICHAEL.

Say, is the bark prepared?

DERCETUS.

Among the rocks
'Tis anchored.

MICHAEL.

Call my slaves! collect my treasure!
And straight conduct my daughter to the vessel.
This night we quit Otranto.

DERCETUS.

How! this night?

MICHAEL.

Durazzo's mine, and thither points our course.
Speed, speed, my friend! [*Exit* Dercetus.

MICHAEL.

And thou good doating husband,
Dream on securely, while far hence I bear
Thy soul's most precious treasure. Thus the pil-
grim,

(While near his couch the snake creeps slow and silent,)
Slumbers unconscious on some flowery bank.
Sweet is his rest; his dreams are bright—when lo!
Deep strikes the sting, and the wretch wakes to anguish! [*Exit.*

Scene—*A Gallery formed in the Rock.*

Enter ADELGITHA *and* CLAUDIA [*bearing a torch.*]

ADELGITHA.

Here must we part!

~~CLAUDIA.~~

~~Moment of grief and terror!~~

ADELGITHA.

If I succeed, if he resigns those proofs,
All's well!—I'll fly to Guiscard, and implore him
With such fond energy to save Lothair,
He needs must grant my suit—But should I fail,
And yonder cave prove my untimely tomb,
Be it thy care to tell my mournful story,
Clear that dear hapless youth, and teach the world,
Though treacherous arts had stained my youthful honour,
My heart was pure, and not unworthy Guiscard's.
Now to my fearful task!—Friend, ~~give my veil~~!
Thy torch ~~too~~—Wait thou yonder.

CLAUDIA [*bursting into tears*].

Oh! my Princess!
Oh! friend!—[*kneeling.*]

4

L. H. C. Adelgitha Torch-Dagger

K. H. C. Michael Ducas

ADELGITHA [*embracing her with emotion*].

Farewell!

CLAUDIA.

Farewell!

ADELGITHA [*breaking from her*].

Perhaps.... for ever! [*Exeunt severally.*

Scene 2d.—*A Cavern; through a natural Arch in the centre of the back-scene the Sea is visible, with the Moon shining on it. On one Side of the Arch is a rough-hewn Staircase, conducting to an upper Gallery, and on the same Side is the Mouth of an inner Cave, partly overgrown with Ivy and other tangling Weeds; it is ornamented with a Cross, an Image, a Skull and Cross-Bones, &c.—On the opposite Side is the great Entrance to the Cavern.*

JULIAN *enters with a Lamp, conducting* LOTHAIR *and* IMMA, *by the great Entrance.*

JULIAN [*to* LOTHAIR].

Here thou may'st rest in safety, while I seek
The bark to bear us hence; but, gentle Princess,
First let me guide thee back....

LOTHAIR [*to* IMMA].

And must you go?
Oh! first repeat the assurance, that no longer
You doubt *his* faith who only lives for you!

The heart can ever change, that once is yours!
And swear, by yon fair Moon, whose mournful radiance
Silvers the billows which must waft me hence,
No power of absence and no rival's arts
Shall e'er efface Lothair from Imma's bosom!

IMMA.

Alas! Before your lips affirmed your truth,
So much I hoped you true, I half believed it.
Yet still such proofs.... My father's heavy charge..
And she, pure honour's mirror, Adelgitha,
She too attested.... Hence, distracting doubts,
For I *will* credit what I wish were true!
Still, dear enchanter, breathe those magic vows,
Which charmed to rest the tempest of my bosom!
E'en though you're false, persuade me that you're faithful;
E'en though you hate me, swear I'm fondly loved:
Close to my heart I'll press the sweet delusion,
And kiss the veil that hides such cruel truths!

LOTHAIR.

And will these sounds, which on his parting ear
Vibrate so sweetly, greet Lothair's return?
Soon at thy beauty's shrine adoring monarchs
Shall boast, they bear thy chains, and swear in rapture,
—"If crowns are brilliant, 'tis when Imma wears them!"—
Pleased while you listen to the flattering tale,
All thoughts of passion past will fade away,

And in some rival's arms, thou'l't ne'er remember
A wretch like me exists!

IMMA.

Unjust suspicions!
Oh! would 'twere in my power at once to crush them,
And share thy flight, thy dangers, and thy woes;
More blest with thee to taste the bread of want,
Than here in splendid slavery weep out life,
Robbed of all joy, for joy will fly with thee.
But oh! that fearful thought, my father's curse...
A father, who, whate'er his faults to others,
Has none to me.... No, no! I dare not grieve him,
And we *must* part, Lothair!—[*weeping.*]

JULIAN.

Your pardon, Princess;
Time flies; your absence may create suspicions,
Whose danger....

IMMA.

Straight I come—and whither wilt thou,
Dear friend, direct thy wandering course?

LOTHAIR.

Thou know'st,
The Christian kings prepare a potent force
To free the Holy Land from hands of heathens:
I'll aid the attempt.—Who knows but Heaven may grant me
To hurl some fierce barbarian from that throne,
His foul idolatry and crimes pollute?
Oh! then how swift my keel shall cut the billows;

Love's purple wings shall agitate the air
To swell my sails, and waft me back to Europe,
In Imma's eyes to read my purest praise,
And lay at Imma's feet my heart and sceptre.

IMMA.

Come thus, and Imma's thine—But should'st thou fall,
Rest thou assured, my love, no rival e'er
Shall clasp this hand, on which thy lips have rested.
A cloistered mourner, wrapt in sable weeds,
I'll weep thy loss, till life be wept away:
But at my dying hour, a form more bright
Than Love's first blush, or Fancy's brilliant visions,
Shall blaze on my charmed sight, and hovering o'er me,
Cry—"Imma, rise! the trial's past!—*I* call thee,
Thy guardian angel now, but once Lothair!"—
Then will I break my fragile chains of clay,
Spring from the earth, and soar aloft with thee
To yon blest realms, where sorrow never comes,
But light, and life, and joy are all eternal:
Songs of according spheres shall hymn our union,
And saints and seraphs bless our loves divine!—
Farewell!—Oh! Heaven!—Farewell! [*Exit Imma.*

JULIAN.

I'll straight return:
Wait thou in yonder cave. [*Exit Julian.*

LOTHAIR.

Celestial Imma!
O'er this fond heart how potent is thy reign;

Condemned to die, fame, freedom, hope, all lost....
She came! she spoke! she smiled, and all was bright.
Such, Beauty, is thy power.—Oh! woman, woman!
Enchantress! Angel! All things own thy sway!
The neck, which scorns all other yokes, is proud
To draw thy roseate car! thy melting voice
Lures the light flutterer from its tree!—thy smile
Tames the fierce tiger's rage; and hearts, more cold
And hard than rock-born chrystal, melt like wax,
Touched by the magic fires of thy bright eyes.
Hear, Goddess, hear my vows! Lothair adores thee!

[*Exit into the inner Cavern.*

Ll. L. ADELGITHA [*with a torch*] *descends the flight of Steps.*

ADELGITHA.

Not come yet? [*She fixes the Torch in a crevice of the Rock*]—then I've still some moments left
To think.... to pray!—[*She sinks on her knee, and raises her hands to Heaven*]—Save me!—
[*A pause, after which she rises*]
How dread this silence!—
The night-wind chills my blood—the pale cold moon....
These echoing rocks.... the murmuring waves ...
~~yon cave too....~~
~~Thither St. Hilda fled from treacherous man,~~
~~There lived in innocence, there died in peace.~~
~~Oh! virgin saint, would I had lived like thee,~~
~~And that like thee, the grave long since had held me.~~

For I have lived to find life grown unlovely,
And prove the sage's mournful words too true,
—" Whom the Gods love, dies early!"—*

MICHAEL [*without*].

Sure yon torch.....

ADELGITHA.

He comes—his voice seemed thunder to my ear—
Now then for life or death.

Enter MICHAEL-DUCAS.

MICHAEL.

Lo! where she stands,
Destined to crown at once my love and vengeance!
—Now, Princess.... Ha!—I miss that high demeanour
Inspiring such respect, when last we parleyed!
No scornful smile! no virtuous lightnings flashing
Quick from thine eyes to strike presumption dead!
Nay, speak, and let me hear thy lips once more
School with condign reproof licentious passion,
And teach, how great Salerno's virtuous daughter
—" Sees nothing fearful but deserved disgrace!"—

ADELGITHA.

I'm humbled.... weak..... a sufferer.... and a woman!
Now (if thou hast the heart) insult me still.

MICHAEL.

Insult thee?—No, ungrateful: those bright eyes

* " Ον οι θεοι φιλωσι, αποθνησκει νεος."

Still o'er my heart hold an unbounded empire.
Fain would I hush thy grief. . . .

ADELGITHA.

Oh! if thou would'st,
How easy were the task! Look on me, Prince!
Grief tears my heart; my eyes are swoll'n with weeping,
And *thou* may'st calm that heart, and dry those eyes.
Those fatal letters . . . . Yield them to my prayers;
Save me from shame, and I'll through life implore
Heaven on thy head to shower its choicest blessings!

MICHAEL.

Nay, we'll not trouble Heaven, fair dame; In thee
I see that blessing, which my soul most covets,
And mine it must be.—Vainly darts thine eye
That look of horror, for thy fate is fixed,
And *Vengeance* speaks thy doom, if *Love* were silent.
I hate thy Guiscard, and to glut that hate
With costly food, have probed his inmost soul:
I find his dearest gems are thee and honour,
And both this night are lost.

ADELGITHA [*starting*].

Mean'st thou . . . ?

MICHAEL.

This night
I'll bear thee hence, at once content my passion,
And brand the man I hate with shame immortal.
Thou'rt in my power . . . .

ADELGITHA.

No, tyrant, thou'rt deceived;

I've still *one* refuge left; and here I swear,
Ere Guiscard's cheek shall know one tear of grief,
Or blush of shame, occasioned by my fault,
In death's embrace I'll shelter me from thine,
And stab my heart rather than Guiscard's honour.

MICHAEL [*ironically*].

Thou'lt die?—Alas! I'm skilled in woman's courage,
And know, what vows she swears, and how she *keeps* them.
Swords, precipices, poison, racks, and flames,
Viewed in perspective, she esteems mere trifles:
But when the moment comes, she thinks, 'twere pity
To stain a skin so *very* white with blood;
So wipes her eyes, and lays aside her dagger.

ADELGITHA.

Unmanly slanderer!

MICHAEL [*fiercely*].

Yet though fate had sworn,
The hour, which made thee mine, should hear thy knell,
Mine would I make thee still!

ADELGITHA.

Barbarian! fiend!
Thou lov'st, as others hate.

MICHAEL.

Though Pleasure fly me,
I'll quaff full draughts from sweet Revenge's bowl:
Living, thou'rt mine ....

ADELGITHA.

And dead....?

MICHAEL.

Thou art not Guiscard's,
And that's some comfort still.

ADELGITHA [*drawing a dagger*].

Then take that comfort,
And triumph o'er my corse!—[*offering to stab herself.*]

MICHAEL.

Rash woman, hold!—[*wrests the dagger from her, and throws it on the ground.*]—And now....

~~ADELGITHA.~~

~~Oh! treacherous arm!~~

~~MICHAEL.~~

No power can save thee.
Know, mid yon rocks e'en now the vessel waits
Destined to waft thee hence.

ADELGITHA.

Oh! Heaven!

MICHAEL.

Away then;
I'll bear thee to the bark.

ADELGITHA [*throwing herself at his feet*].

I sink before thee!
She kneels to *thee*, who ne'er yet knelt to man!
Have thou compassion!

~~MICHAEL.~~

~~Idle prayers!—Nay, rise!~~

ADELGITHA.

I kiss thy feet: I bathe them with my tears!

MICHAEL.

Thy tears increase thy beauty.

ADELGITHA [*struggling*].

Spare me! Spare me!
Show mercy yet!

MICHAEL.

None! none!

ADELGITHA [*in a terrible voice, while she seizes the dagger, which lies near her, and starts from the ground*].

Then perish, tyrant!—[*stabs him.*]

MICHAEL.

'Tis to my heart!—Oh! rage!—What hoa!—Dercetus!—
Fly to my aid . . and seize . . . . I faint! . . Oh; murderess.—[*He staggers back some paces, and falls senseless on the earth.*]

ADELGITHA.

[*Who has remained in a menacing attitude, starts with horror at the last word*].

Murderess?—Right! right!—'tis now my fittest name!
Rise, dæmons, rise! ~~'Tis Adelgitha calls you;~~
~~Her hand has signed in blood the infernal bond;~~
~~Which makes her yours for ever! Rise then, rise,~~
And shake the rocks with horrid mirth, loud shrieking
—"Rejoice! rejoice! the murderess is our own!"—

6

Jonna

Rainulf

R.H.B. Julian

6 Knights

4 Guards Torches

Enter LOTHAIR [*from the Cave, with his Sword drawn.*]

LOTHAIR.

Murder was shrieked!—Ha!—Speak thy business here,
And what thou art?

ADELGITHA.

A fiend, who comes to banquet
On blood among these rocks; ~~who much has drank,~~
And thirsts for more!—Observe these flaming eyes
Mark the black drops, which trickle from this steel;
And if thy life is dear, avoid my presence.—
Advance not, or thou diest!

LOTHAIR.

That voice .... Amazement!
'Tis she! the Princess sure!—[*dropping his sword.*]

ADELGITHA [*shrieking*].

Lothair! Oh! horror!
This still was wanting!—[*supports herself against the Rock.*]

LOTHAIR.

Blood imbrues her dagger:—
~~And lo! a corse whose gaping wound,~~ ....
Oh! Princess,
What hast thou done?

ADELGITHA.

A deed of guilt, of madness;
And of *what* guilt thine eyes express too well!
Nay, give thy hatred words: I fain would die;

And speak but thou with truth and force—"*I hate thee!*"—
~~And~~ lightning would ~~not~~ *never* strike me dead so soon.

LOTHAIR.

Hate thee? ~~Oh! powers of bliss! My brain whirls round!~~
I know not what to think . . . . or say . . . or do:
I can but feel, all guilty as thou art . . . . .
The world holds nothing, which my soul loves dearer!

ADELGITHA.

Say'st thou?—Thanks, Heaven, for this last drop of comfort
Thrown in my bitter cup! Lothair, Lothair!
This heart . . . . . thou dost not know . . . . . Hark! the rock echoes
With hurried steps!—If here I'm found, my fame,
My life are lost!—Save me, Lothair, oh! save me,
For I'm so guilty, that I dare not die!
Oh! save me, save me!

LOTHAIR.

They're at hand!—Fly! fly!
Yon steps conduct . . . .

ADELGITHA

[*Attempting to reach them, but sinking back ready to faint, and catching at a broken piece of the Rock.*]

I cannot! my strength fails me!
My doom is fixed!

LOTHAIR [*raising her*].

Take courage!—Rest on me!—
~~The torch!~~ [*taking the torch in one hand, while the other clasps* Adelgitha].
Come, come... Fear not! I'll die or save you!
Nay, come!—Away!—Away!

[*Exeunt by the steps L. H. E.*

R. H. E. Enter IMMA [*hastily.*]

IMMA.

Fly, fly, Lothair!
Julian is seized, and Rainulf this way hastens!
Lothair?—He answers not!—Oh! Heaven, they come.

R. H. E. Enter RAINULF, JULIAN, *and* Guards *with Torches.*

RAINULF [*to Julian*].

If thou deceiv'st me, ~~wretch, thy life shall pay for it.~~
Not here?

JULIAN.

In yonder cave....

IMMA [*placing herself before the entrance of the Cave.*

Stay, Rainulf, stay!
Pursue your search no further! On my life,
The babe, who ne'er yet lisped the name of mother,
Is not more guiltless than Lothair.

RAINULF.

His flight
Argues not innocence.—Your pardon, Princess;
I needs must on.—[*To the Guards*] This way.

[*Exeunt into the Cave.*

IMMA [*alone*].

Ye guardian angels,
Hear, hear my prayers, and spread your sheltering wings
O'er poor Lothair!

MICHAEL [*half raising himself with difficulty*].

That voice seemed .... Oh! that pang!

IMMA.

Hark! 'twas a groan!—Who breathed it?

MICHAEL [*faintly*].

Imma!—Imma!

IMMA [*with a loud shriek*].

My father!—~~Help!~~ [*running to him*]

MICHAEL.

~~My child! Farewell!~~ [*dies*]

IMMA.

Oh! horror!—[*faints on the body.*]

LOTHAIR [*rushing down the steps*].

'Twas Imma shrieked!

RAINULF

[*entering at the same moment, followed by the* Guards].

Lothair!
~~Guards! seize him!~~

LOTHAIR [*held by the Guards*].

Imma!

[*Part of the* Guards *detain* LOTHAIR *in the back ground, while the rest form a groupe round* IMMA *and her Father.*—RAINULF *(a tall martial figure in armour) stands in the middle, extending one arm towards* LOTHAIR.]

25

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

Jacob to Give Birth

ACT V.

Adelgitha's *Apartment.*

ADELGITHA *(pale, and her hair dishevelled,) is discovered reclining on a couch in an attitude of fixed despair.*

ADELGITHA.

Here sits the fiend; here on my heart; to leave it
No more!—Fool, fool! I thought my crime unknown,
Was vain, was proud, and decked my brow unblushing
With honours, Virtue's front alone should wear.
My dream of pride is flown; too late I feel,
—"Who sins, ne'er sins unpunished!"—Low I'm fallen;
So low, 'tis past a Seraph's strength to raise me!
Lower I *cannot* fall, till death shall..... [*rising*]—Death?
Oh! dreadful thought!—More dreadful still, what follows....
But not *alone* I'll suffer!—
[*Solemn and majestic*]—George of Clermont,
Hear thou my voice, and tremble in thy shroud!
I term thee him, who forged that fatal link,

First of the chain that binds me to perdition;
I charge on thee that step, which since has led me
Through wond'rous ways to stain my soul with blood:
And when arrives that day of terror, destined
To weigh at Mercy's throne our faults and merits,
The accusing angel in thy scale shall throw
My guilt's most hideous half!—Hark! steps approach.

Enter CLAUDIA.

ADELGITHA.

Oh! friend, is't thou?—My heart is torn.... distracted....
Come, Claudia, come, and shield me from myself!

CLAUDIA.

What can I say? or how console that grief,
Whose very nature mocks relief and comfort?
The blow is struck; tears cannot wash out blood:
Oh! if they *could*, I'd vie with thee in sorrow,
And number drop for drop.

ADELGITHA.

Why, thou say'st true!
Tears cannot wash out blood: then wherefore weep,
And nourish in my heart the asp, which stings it?
Hence with remorse! I'll rush from crime to crime
In mad career; till grown with guilt familiar,
I shrink no longer at the monster's sight!
Murder shall be my sport; I'll stab the priest,
While at the mass he lifts on high the censer,

Then laugh to see his blood bedew the shrine!
He, who by frequent wounds has murdered conscience,
Knows not the anguish, which now tears my breast;
'Tis the *half*-villain suffers! Souls in torture
May groan, but torturing fiends exult; and now
A torturing fiend will *I* be

CLAUDIA.

Oh! I fear me
Her reason sinks beneath this cruel shock!
Repress these transports, or thou'rt lost, my Princess:
The banquet's spread; Apulia's chiefs surround
Thy lord; quick circulates the bowl, and minstrels
Make the vaults echo with triumphant songs,
Yet Guiscard 'mid the swell of festive mirth
Laments thy absence, and e'en now implores
Thou'lt grace the banquet....

ADELGITHA.

I?—Not worlds should bribe me!

CLAUDIA.

Alas! thou must!

ADELGITHA [*violently*].

I tell thee, no, no, no!
He'd see the blood which stains my hands, and hate me!

CLAUDIA [*entreating*].

Dear friend....

ADELGITHA.

I will not go; will *not!*

CLAUDIA.

Reflect!
With festive mirth when all his friends crowd round him,
Hailing his safe return, shouldst *thou* alone
Avoid him, 'twould excite such wonder.... Yield,
And seek the Banquet-Hall: compose thy spirits;
Veil under needful art....

ADELGITHA.

Art? Art?—I thank thee!—
I *feel* that bitter taunt.

CLAUDIA [*reproachfully*].

Oh! Adelgitha!

ADELGITHA.

Thou mean'st, that she, who for twelve years deceived
The best and wisest of existing mortals,
Is sure so shrewdly versed in falsehood's lore,
To feign must cost her little!—Nay, thour't right!
Come! lead me to the Hall!—I'll smile so sweetly,
And speak so smooth, and look so calm and happy,
Thyself shalt wonder at my skill, and doubt,
If I'm *indeed* the murderess Adelgitha!

CLAUDIA.

That to thy Claudia? to thy friend of youth,
Whose long-proved love.... Unkind!

ADELGITHA [*embracing her*].

Oh! friend, forgive me;
I know not what I say!—My brain is turning!—
Asked Guiscard where I staid?

CLAUDIA.

He did.

ADELGITHA.

You answered.... ?

CLAUDIA.

That grateful for his wished return, you sought
St. Hilda's Shrine to pray....

ADELGITHA [*laughing wildly*].

Right, right!—Oh! excellent!
'Twere not enough, by night and mystery favoured,
To plunge in human hearts the secret knife,
Used not the hypocrite Religion's robe
To veil her guilt; and if that bloody deed,
Through which she earned the assassin's name, obtained not
The honours of a saint!— Oh! shame! shame! shame!
Break, heart, and let me rest!—[*throwing herself on the couch*].

CLAUDIA.

Unhappy Princess,
Would thou couldst share with me thy weight of woes!
—How now!—Who comes?

Enter TANCRED.

TANCRED [*to* Claudia].

Lady, Apulia's chiefs
Through me entreat, the Princess with her smiles
Would deign to grace their banquet.

CLAUDIA.

Straight she comes! [*Exit* Tancred.
Oh! let my prayers prevail!—Lothair is fled,
And in the grave of Michael buried lies
Your fault of youth.—Let not your grief betray you,
And what has past this night is hid from all.

ADELGITHA.

Aye! aye! from all.....save God, and my own conscience!

CLAUDIA.

Oh! Heaven!—Your Guiscard waits: come, let us seek him!

ADELGITHA.

I'll seek my grave! my grave!

CLAUDIA.

Nay, speak not thus!
Bind up your streaming locks; compose your robes;
Calm these wild thoughts....

ADELGITHA.

Oh! never shall my thoughts
Be calm again! No, never! never! never!

CLAUDIA.

Hush! hush!—Lean on my arm!

ADELGITHA.

Oh! guilt! oh! grief!

CLAUDIA.

Dear friend, be soothed!

ADELGITHA.

Oh! murdered, murdered Michael! [*Exeunt.*

Act 5th Music

Scene a Gothic Hall splendidly illuminated—The background is filled with banquet-tables, round which sit Tancred *and the Knights with Pages attending on them.—On one side is a Staircase leading to Adelgitha's apartment.—Opposite is the Great Entrance.—*

Guiscard *occupies an elevated seat.—Opposite to him sits* Hubert, *an ancient Minstrel, with his harp, and four younger Minstrels ranged behind him.*

Martial Ballad and Chorus, by Hubert *and Minstrels.*

HUBERT.

I.

Count Hildebrand leapt on his berry-brown steed,
For the king of his sword and his heart was in need;
The Saracens landed, he sought them with speed,
And swore, that he'd conquer, or perish.
His lady so lovely, his lady so true,
From her turret sobb'd out an eternal adieu,
For the knight from her sight when he sped, well she knew,
Had sworn, that he'd conquer, or perish!

MINSTRELS.

Had sworn, that he'd conquer, or perish!

II.

HUBERT.

Count Hildebrand fell by the Saracen's glaive;
His king mourn'd the loss of a warrior so brave;
And the tears of his country still fall on his grave,
Who swore, that he'd conquer, or perish.

1

Griseard

Tancred

6 Knights

Dis? 2 Pages

8 Gentlemen

12 Ladies

8 Soldiers

R. Adelgitha

Clandia

Come, Knights! and let each, while his goblet he drains,
(If you've hearts in your breasts, if you've blood in your veins,)
Now sing—"For our King, and the land where he reigns,
We swear, "That we'll conquer, or perish!"—

[*The Knights all rise, with their swords drawn in one hand, and their goblets in the other, and repeat the burthen*]

FULL CHORUS.

We swear that we'll conquer, or perish!

GUISCARD.

Why, this looks well!—Fill every goblet high!—
How say ye, Knights? Boasts this wine richer flavour,
Than that we quaffed, encamped before Durazzo,
Our health—"To victory or death!"—That night
Clouds hung on Valour's brow; Wit's brilliant flash
Illumed the feast no more; and many a hand,
Next morn which strewed the field with hostile Greeks,
Shook, as against the lip it placed the goblet.
Oh! Heaven! 'tis sweet to read content and pleasure
In eyes, when shaded by the cowl so awful,
O'er Friendship's bowl to talk of perils past,
And share our joys with those, who shared our dangers!

TANCRED.

Small praise they merit, prince, who serve with thee:

All subjects would be true, were all kings Guiscards.
But doubt not, should thy cause again require
Our swords. . . .

GUISCARD.

Far distant be the hour, when armour
Again shall case my limbs! I'll ne'er refuse
To sluice these veins, whene'er thy welfare needs it,
Beloved Apulia:—but my soul abhors
That man, whose thirst of power or pride of conquest
Distracts the globe, and builds with bleeding corses
The savage trophy of his vain renown.——
The storm, whose lightnings blast and whirlwinds ravage,
From all exacts surprise, and awe, and terror:
But far more happy is that genial shower
Falling to fertilize some thirsty land,
Which hears the blessings rise of grateful peasants
For plenty, health, and toils not borne in vain.—
[*Rising*] ~~Rise~~ speak of war no more!—for lo! *she* comes,
Whose presence sheds around her peace and joy!
[*All rise.*]

R. Adelgitha *descends the staircase, with* Claudia ~~and Ladies~~.

GUISCARD.

Oh! welcome, welcome, as the wished-for port
To some long-absent seaman!—Why, my soul,
Hast thou so long deprived me of thy sight?

2

L. Emma

Rainulf Leiter

~~My heart can know no mirth, while thou art from~~
~~me,~~
~~As rainbows shine not, when the sun's withdrawn.~~

ADELGITHA.

Guiscard!—So ill I merit.... I'm so conscious....
My heart.... there couldst thou read....

CLAUDIA [*whispering her*].

Beware, dear Princess!

GUISCARD [*with anxiety*].

Methinks thour't strangely pale!——Yet 'tis no wonder:
That place, where thou hast been to-night....

ADELGITHA [*alarmed*].

To-night?—
That place?—Thou know'st then.... ?

GUISCARD.

That religious duties
Have long detained thee in St. Hilda's Chapel:
And much I fear, ~~the damp from [illegible]ing~~
~~The marble walls~~..... the night wind's chilling blast....

2

ADELGITHA [*with a mixture of irony.*]

True! true!—the night-wind—Oh! 'tis nothing more!
'Twill soon be past.

GUISCARD [*taking a goblet from a Page*].

I trust so; ~~and this bowl~~
~~Will shed a cordial warmth through [illegible] veins.~~
Look round thee, sweet! Apulia's champions stand

Expecting from thy lips [illegible]
Their best reward, [illegible]
them.
Greet them, my love!

ADELGITHA [*takes the bowl; then suddenly dashes it on the ground*].

Away! 'tis filled with blood!

[illegible]

[illegible]!

GUISCARD [*surprised*].

What means....?

ADELGITHA.

Have I deserved this, Guiscard?—
I ever loved thee with such truth.. such fondness..
I know, how monstrous is my fault.... but *this*....
Oh! this was cruel! cruel!—[*weeping on* Claudia's *bosom*].

GUISCARD.

[illegible]
[illegible]?—Why weep, and hide thy face?
Turn to thy Guiscard! Turn to him, who loves thee!

ADELGITHA [*eagerly*].

Thou lov'st me! Oh! repeat those blessed sounds!
Swear, still thou lov'st me!

GUISCARD.

Canst thou doubt my love?

ADELGITHA [*insisting on the word*].

Still!—Lov'st me *still!*—Pronounce that word—
"Still! still!"

3

L Lothair

GUISCARD [*surprised at her wild energy*].

Still love thee more than life!

ADELGITHA [*exulting*].

Why then, ye Heavens,
In thunder speak your wrath: I'll hear and smile!
Conscience, thy sting is lost! ~~Let rocking earth-~~
~~quakes,~~
~~Where my foot treads, declare, that Nature loaths~~
~~me:~~
~~Let the blest sun-beams sicken at my sight;~~
He loves me *still*, and all things else are trifles.
Hail, warriors, hail! Resume your seats! Fill high
Your bowls ~~with sparkling wine~~; ~~your echoing~~
~~harps—~~
~~Strike, Minstrels, strike~~; swell round me, choral
music,
And peals of bursting joy, rise, rise, and drown
That voice, I *will not* hear!—

GUISCARD.

This change so sudden....
This frantic rapture....

ADELGITHA.

Ask not, what it means;
Thou lov'st me, and I'm blest: Let that suffice!
Come, chieftains! Guiscard, come!

IMMA [*without*].

Where ... where's the Prince?

ADELGITHA [*shuddering*].

'Tis Imma!—'Tis *his* daughter!

L. Imma *rushes in wildly;* Rainulf *and Attendants follow her.*

IMMA.

Justice! justice!
Oh! princely Guiscard, at thy feet I fall,
And clasp thy knees, and call on thee for vengeance!
See these torn ringlets, pallid cheeks, eyes swoll'n,
And pity me!—My heart is stabbed! is breaking!
He's dead! Oh! Heaven, he's dead!

GUISCARD.

Rise, Imma, rise!
Whom mourn ye?

IMMA.

Can I speak the name, and live?
The assassin's dagger.... near the rocks he lies,
Pale! breathless! cold!—I threw me by his side,
And strove to warm him 'gainst my heart.. in *vain!*.
He's dead! he's dead! My father's dead!

GUISCARD.

Thy father?

IMMA.

Savagely murdered! All the winds and fires
Of Heaven would vainly strive to yield his frame
One breath of air, or spark of vital heat!
Oh! wretched Imma!

ADELGITHA.

How I suffer!

CLAUDIA [*in a low voice*].

Silence,
For Heaven's sake!

IMMA [*to* Adelgitha].

Ah! you weep!—But had *you* seen,
As *I* did, his pale cheeks! his gaping wound!
The cold dews stealing down his brows! his limbs
Convulsed by dying pangs. . . . and last and worst,
That frightful rattle while he breathed my name
For the last time. . . .

ADELGITHA.

Agony! agony!

IMMA.

And then to think, he lost that last poor comfort,
To feel his death-bed smoothed by Friendship's hand!
And then to think, no priest absolved his errors. . . .
And they were great! and oh! how strict a reckoning
May be above exacted. . . . *!

ADELGITHA.

Imma! Imma!
Thoul't drive me mad!

GUISCARD.

Confused by rage and horror,
I know not to console. . . . but doubt not, Lady,
If still Otranto holds the wretch, I'll find him,
And take such dread revenge. . . .

RAINULF.

Forgive my boldness:
Fainting through anguish on her father's corse,

*" And how his audit stands, who knows save Heaven?"
HAMLET.

The Princess knows not, ere we left the rocks
The assassin was surprised

GUISCARD.

Say'st thou?

ADELGITHA [*aside*].

What means he?

RAINULF.

Concealed he lurked....

GUISCARD.

Produce the wretch!

RAINULF [*goes out, and returns with* Lothair *in chains*].

Behold him!

GUISCARD.

Lothair!

ADELGITHA [*to* Claudia].

Should he betray me....

CLAUDIA.

Hush! he will not!
Be calm!

GUISCARD.

Lothair the assassin?

IMMA.

No, Prince, no!
On my soul, no! If aught that's ill had menaced
The life of Imma's father, he had found
No surer safeguard than Lothair!

GUISCARD [*to* Rainulf]

What proofs....?

East or South -
Is not a hut ——
A.

RAINULF.

His lurking mid the rocks. . . . his sword unsheathed
Found near the corse. . their well-known enmity. .
This day's events. . . .

GUISCARD.

All, all confirm him guilty !—[*To* Lothair]
What hast thou done, base, wretched youth?—Thy crime
At once robs *thee* of life, and *me* of honour!
A sovereign slain !—A sovereign at my court
Who sought protection, and who found a grave !
The astonished world (blending our names) will judge,
'Twas Guiscard's polity which nerved thy arm ;
And after-ages, hearkening this foul murder,
Will curse the Prince, who sheltered to destroy !

LOTHAIR.

What *can* I say ?—So deep and dark a gloom
Involves my fate, that I despair to pierce it !
Yet that one Master-power produced and governs
This universal globe. . . . that mortal eyes
Are prone to error. . . . that vice oft is decked with
That glory-circle, which had fitter graced
Heads, which have fall'n beneath the axe of law. .
These truths are not more true, than this I swear—
The snow that falls is not from taint so pure,
As are my hands from blood, my lips from falsehood!

IMMA.

Then clear thy conduct, and relieve my heart,
Which trembles for thy love, thy life, thy virtue!

Who placed thy faulchion by my father's corse?
So near him, didst not hear his shriek for succour?
Knows't thou, whose hand.... He turns away in silence!

ADELGITHA [*aside*].

Reward him, Heaven!

IMMA.

Wilt thou not speak?

LOTHAIR.

I'll answer
This, but no more.—As I've a soul to save,
The hand which slew thy father was not mine.

IMMA.

Then whose, barbarian?—Go! Thou ne'er hast loved me!
Lived in thy breast one feeling spark, thou couldst not
Suffer such doubts to rack *her* soul, who would not
Grieve thine for the world's wealth!

LOTHAIR.

Inhuman Imma!
~~'Tis past endurance! Kill me, Princess, kill me!~~
To die were better, than to cause those tears!
I've steeled my heart to bear all human anguish,
As a man should: but what I suffer now,
Demands the strength and patience of a god.
Oh! spare me, spare me! Leave me to my fate!

GUISCARD.

I know not what to think!—His oaths.... his anguish....
Should he indeed be guiltless....

RAINULF.

Gracious Prince,
Know, that on Michael's corse the note was found,
Which lured him to those secret rocks.

ADELGITHA [*aside*].

Oh! heavens!

GUISCARD.

Was it not signed?

RAINULF.

It was not; but the writing
Perhaps may lend some clue....

GUISCARD.

You counsel well:
Produce that note

ADELGITHA [*aside*].

I'm lost!

RAINULF.

[illegible] [*Exit L.*

LOTHAIR [*aside*].

She started!—then 'twas *hers!*

ADELGITHA [*in a low voice to* Claudia].

Now, Claudia, now!
Now what resource....

GUISCARD [*to* Imma, *who is weeping, supported by the Attendants*].

Sweet mourner, would some comfort....
Spirits of bliss, I ask not from your stores
Your prescient sense, nor boundless power, nor life

That knows no end!—But grant me some blest charm
To heal the wounds o' the mind; to seal in slumber
Grief's pain-stretched eye-lids, and with lenient skill
To draw the poisoned arrow forth, which rankles
In suffering virtue's heart!

LOTHAIR [*aside*].

I hear his steps!

ADELGITHA [*breathless with anxiety*],

Now!—Now!

LOTHAIR [*aside.*]

What must be done?—Oh! wretched woman!

Re-enter Rainulf.

RAINULF [*kneeling*].

This letter, Prince. . . .

LOTHAIR [*snatching it, and tearing it*],

Shall ne'er betray its writer;
This makes the secret safe!

GUISCARD.

Rash youth, forbear!

IMMA [*in despair*].

Then there's no hope!—He's guilty!

ADELGITHA.

Cleudi!—Cleudi!

GUISCARD.

What means thy daring act?

LOTHAIR.

It means, I know

The hand, which traced these lines, and murdered Michael;

~~The hand of one, whose heart is thine by service,~~
~~And whom I'll rather abandon but with life!~~

The cry of murder drew me to the spot,
Where Michael breathed his last; I seized the assassin,
Whose life was in my power—I swore to *save* it,
And now stand here prepared to die ~~rather~~ rather
Than buy existence by a breach of promise.

ADELGITHA [*aside*].

Oh! generous youth!

GUISCARD [*exasperated*].

And can thy folly hope
This paltry trick can blind me? Well I know
Thou fain wouldst hide that writing from my knowledge,
Being *thyself* its author.

LOTHAIR.

By yon stars.... !

GUISCARD [*peremptorily*].

One word decides thy fate!——One choice is left thee!
Reveal the culprit, or thou diest this instant.

LOTHAIR.

Lead to the scaffold!

GUISCARD [*furious*].

'Tis enough!—Guards! seize him!

RAINULF.

Yet be advised, Lothair, nor hope to bury
This strange mysterious secret in the grave:
The rack will force it from thee.

LOTHAIR.

Try its strength then;
Stretch to the finest point thy barbarous skill.
Thou'lt find that virtue has more power to blunt
The shafts of pain, than man has art to forge them;
Nor can thy tortures so afflict my body,
As violated vows would rack my mind.

GUISCARD.

I'll hear no more! Bear him to instant death!

ADELGITHA.

Distracting sound!

LOTHAIR.

Imma!—Not one last look?

GUISCARD.

Force him away!

LOTHAIR.

Imma.... farewell! farewell!—[*Dragged away by the Guards*].

GUISCARD.

Obey me!—To the block!

ADELGITHA [*with a dreadful shriek*].

Oh! spare him! save him!
He's guiltless!

GUISCARD [*starting*].

How?

ADELGITHA [*desperate*].

He's guiltless!——He's *my* son!—*All start, while she rushes to* Lothair, *and clasps him in her arms*].

GUISCARD.

Thy son?

LOTHAIR.

Thy son?

GUISCARD.

Oh! gods! what is't I hear?

ADELGITHA [*firm*].

My shame! my guilt! my fondness! my despair!
'Twas *I*, who murdered Michael; *I*, who now
Repeat, Lothair is guiltless—is my son,
Pleased to lay down my life, to save my child's,
And die for *him*, who would have died for *me!*.
[*Embracing him.*]

LOTHAIR [*kneeling.*]

Oh! mother!

GUISCARD.

Adelgitha! thou, whose virtues....
Art *thou* a murderess?—thou?

ADELGITHA.

Nay, never doubt it!
I own my crime, and I desire no pardon.—
The tale, thou heard'st from me to-day, was mine!
The father of Lothair (long ere thou saw'st me,)
Robbed me of peace and honour: fatal chance

Betrayed to Michael's ear this dangerous secret.
His heart was hard: *my* brain was wrought to frenzy;
He finding threatened me; *I* feared, and slew him.

GUISCARD.

~~Oh! shame! Oh! frenzy! Rash~~ unhappy woman,
What hast thou done?

ADELGITHA.

Swelled by a crime the list
Of those, to which one early error forced me:
'Tis in man's choice, never to sin at all;
But sinning *once*, to stop exceeds his power.

GUISCARD.

My brain!—'Twill bear no more!—[*Rainulf supports him.*]

ADELGITHA.

My son! My son!
Curse me not!—[*to* Lothair.]

LOTHAIR.

Curse thee? Kneeling, thus I bless thee,
And swear, could drops wrung from my inmost heart
Repay the blood thy hand has shed....

GUISCARD [*recovering himself*].

This instant
Let all retire except.... except.... the Princess.

~~ADELGITHA [*detaining Lothair.*]~~

~~Oh! no, no, no! I dare not...~~

GUISCARD [*solemn and commanding*]

Adelgitha!

4

Lothair

2. Emma

Rainulf

Clarice

12. 2 Ladies

R. M

ADELGITHA [*in a faltering voice*].

Prince . . . . . I obey !

[*Exeunt* IMMA, &c.

Manent GUISCARD *and* ADELGITHA.

GUISCARD [*after a pause*].

I'll not reproach thee !—Fear not !—
I will but say . . . . and say it in mild words too . . .
I will but tell thee . . . . . Grief impedes my utterance . . . .
That we must part . . . . for ever !

~~ADELGITHA.~~

~~Oh !~~

GUISCARD.

Thou know'st me ;
Know'st well my dread of shame . . . . my sense of honour . . . .
Know'st well . . . . my love for *thee !*—But what I suffer
To find thee false and guilty, *this*, oh ! this
Thou could'st not know, or sure thou hadst not
Sure, thou would~~st~~red ! *not have deceived me.*

ADELGITHA [*in agony*].

Heart !—Heart !

GUISCARD.

[*his emotions gradually getting the better of him*].

Is't true ?—Can it *indeed* be real ?—
Thou ! thou, on whom I doated !—Thou, whose lips
I thought ne'er knew a falsehood . . . . ~~whose eyes spoke~~
~~Each wish of the heart so plainly~~—In whose arms

I hoped to have met death, which in thine arms
Had been so free from pain!—And now.... and
now....

ADELGITHA

[*Her grief changes into gloomy fierceness*].

And now you *hate* me?

GUISCARD [*wild and desperate*].

Hate thee? would I did! .....
But mark, ungrateful, mark these groans of anguish
Drawn from my soul.... my faltering voice... ~~my~~
~~locks~~
~~Which thus I tear in frenzy~~!—And these tears....
Mark these! Mark these!—then ask me, if I hate
thee!—[*sinks on a seat, over-powered by the violence of his feelings.*]

ADELGITHA.

Ha!—Flow those tears for *me?*—Speak, Guiscard,
speak?
[*Falling at his feet*]—Flow they for *me?*
[*He motions her to leave him; she rises with frantic gesture*]—Fool that I was to hope it!
He shuns me! He abhors me!—Why delay then?
Where are your guards? Come, come! prepare the
scaffold,
And while I seek it, bid the indignant rabble
Load me with scoffs and base revilings....

GUISCARD

[*starting up with looks of horror at the idea*].

Thee!

[*After a moment's pause*]—'Tis fixed, and farewell,
honour! Farewell, ~~joy~~! *poor*

[*To* Adelgitha, *resolute*]—Thy hand in mine!—Partners in weal and woe,
Through life I'll never leave thee, and in death
One grave shall hold us both! Imploring pardon,
I'll wander by thy side from shrine to shrine
A barefoot pilgrim: still in toils and perils
My arm shall guard thee, and my voice shall soothe;
And when thou weep'st to hear insulting crouds
Pursue thy bleeding steps with taunts and curses,
With my torn hair I'll wipe thy tears away,
And hide thee in my breast from scorn and sorrow.

ADELGITHA.

Prince!—Guiscard!—Heard I right?—Canst thou forgive me?

GUISCARD.

I can! I do!

ADELGITHA.

And love me still?

GUISCARD.

Still love thee....
Shame choaks the words upon my tongue.... Still love thee,
And more than light! than life! than fame! than virtue!

ADELGITHA.

I'm happy!—Guiscard, Guiscard.... thus I thank thee, [*embracing him*]
And next *reward* thee thus!—[*stabs herself.*]

GUISCARD [*petrified with horror*].

Help! help!—Within there!

Enter IMMA, LOTHAIR, *&c.*

LOTHAIR.

What mean those cries, ... Oh! cruel sight!—
[*He receives* Adelgitha *in his arms.*]

ADELGITHA [*to* Guiscard].

Thus only
Could I repay thy wond'rous truth, and spare thee
The shame of loving, where esteem was lost.

LOTHAIR.

Fly, fly for aid . . . .

ADELGITHA.

No, no! the steel was faithful . . . .
'Tis my heart's blood which . . . . Oh! that pang!
[*falling.*]

GUISCARD

[*hastening to her, and raising her in his arms*].

She dies!
Look up, my love! my soul! Look up once more!
One parting word . . . . One long adieu . . . . . one
blessing . . . .

ADELGITHA.

Bless thee!—Farewell!—Oh! I am guilty! guilty!—
Pray for my soul's repose!—pray too . . . . . here-
after . . . .
Our spirits . . . . in a better happier world . . . .
Heaven!—Heaven!—'tis past! [*She dies.*

IMMA.

Oh! sight of woe!

LOTHAIR [*kneeling by the corse*].

Oh! mother!
Dear wretched mother!

2,32
2.25 2,,25

ROBISCARD [*touching her hand, and instantly dropping it again*].

Cold!—Quite gone! [*Starting up wildly*]—Away then!

My armour! Spread my banners! launch my barks!
Come, come, my knights! Fix on your shields the cross!
We sail for the Holy Land—[*rushing off, he stops suddenly, looks at the Corse, and bursts into a passion of grief*]—My wife! my wife!
Oh! farewell, Adelgitha!

[*He throws himself in despair on the dead body, near which* LOTHAIR *is kneeling, while* IMMA *is fainting, supported by* CLAUDIA *and* Ladies.*]

* I make no doubt, that Adelgitha's fate will be reckoned too severe. In my justification I must observe, that my object in writing this Tragedy was to illustrate a particular fact; viz. "the difficulty of avoiding the evil consequences of a first false step."—It appeared to me, that the more venial the offence, and the more amiable the character of the offender, the more strongly would the above position be proved; and the very nature of my object made it necessary, that Adelgitha should be the constant victim of her single transgression in *this* life, and only receive the reward of her many virtues in the life to come.—But above all I must request, that no one will mistake Adelgitha for a *heroine*—I meant to represent in her—"A woman, with all her sex's weakness,"—whose natural inclinations were virtuous and benevolent; but who was totally unprovided with that firmness of mind, which might have enabled her to resist the force of imperious circumstances.—Accordingly she gives way to them one after another, and is led on gradually and involuntarily from crime to crime, till she finds herself involved in guilt beyond the possibility of escaping.—Such was my plan, though perhaps the defects of its execution may have prevented the reader from discovering it till now.

THE END.

Just Published by J. F. HUGHES.

CONFESSIONS of the NUN of St. OMER, a Tale, in Three Vols. 13s. 6d. by Charlotte Dacre, better known by the name of Rosa Matilda.

The BRAVO of VENICE, Third Edition, 6s. a Romance, by M. G. Lewis, Esq. Author of the Monk, &c. &c.

RODOLPHUS of WERDENBERG, a Romance, in Two Vols. 7s. by the celebrated La Fontaine.

RUGANTINO, Second Edition, 2s. a Grand Romantic Melo-Drama, in Two Acts, by M. G. Lewis, Esq. performed at Covent Garden Theatre with the greatest applause.

St. BOTOLPH's PRIORY; or, the SABLE MASK, a Romance, in Five Vols. 1l. 5s. by T. Horsely Curties, Esq. Author of Antient Records, Scottish Legends, &c. &c.

The FOREST of St. BERNARDO, a Romance, in Four Vols. 1l. by Miss M. Hamilton.

The VILLAGE of FRIEDWALD, in Three Vols. 13s. 6d. by La Fontaine.

The MYSTERIOUS SISTERS, a Spanish Romance, Two Vols, 8s.

IN THE PRESS.

The MONK of UDOLPHO, a Romance, 4 Vols. 1l. 4s. by T. H. Curties, Esq.

The SPANISH OUTLAW, a Romance, Four Vols.

The MONK and His DAUGHTER, a Novel, in Three Vols. by Miss Davies, of Covent Garden Theatre.

ADELAIDE, a Romance, in Four Vols. by Miss Grant.

Printed by D. N. SHURY, Berwick Street, Soho.

PR
4887
A6
1806a

Lewis, Matthew Gregory
Adelgitha

PLEASE DO NOT REMOVE
CARDS OR SLIPS FROM THIS POCKET

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO LIBRARY